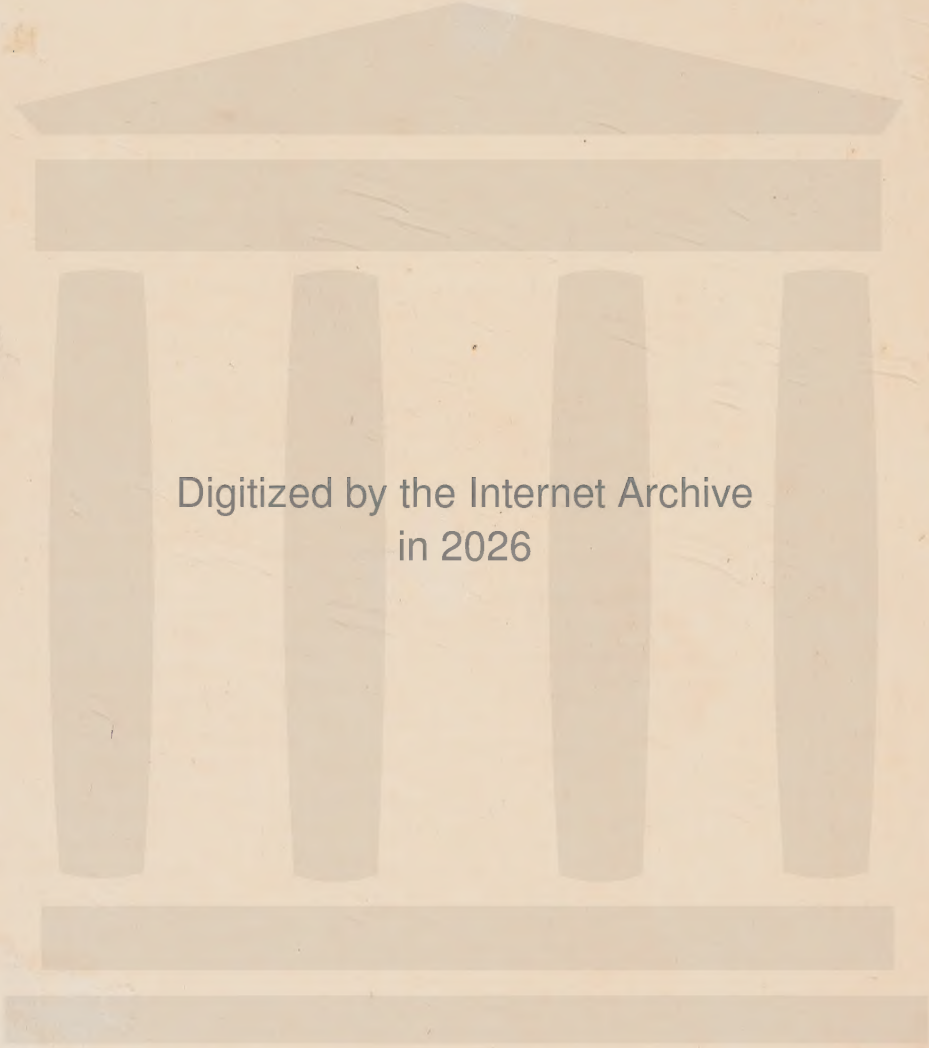
The Outline of Literature & Art

Edited by
John Drinkwater
and
Sir William Orpen



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"THE MAGNIFICAT," BY BOTTICELLI (1444–1510)

In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Of all the fifteenth-century Italian painters whose names are famous in history, none surpassed Alessandro Botticelli in the creation of works of sheer beauty. "The Madonna of the Magnificat" is generally regarded as the supreme masterpiece among his many paintings of the Madonna, both for its decorative charm and its intense spirituality of expression.

THE OUTLINE
OF
LITERATURE & ART

EDITED BY
JOHN DRINKWATER
AND
SIR WILLIAM ORPEN, R.A.

WITH 1000 ILLUSTRATIONS AND FIFTY COLOUR PLATES

ART

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The Outline of Art

INTRODUCTION

FROM the earliest times, man has felt a need to express his joy in the world which surrounds him. In the caves of the Dordogne, the artists of the Stone Age made the first step towards picture painting when they scratched the outlines of reindeer and ibex on pieces of bone and drew a combat of animals with spirit and realism. These prehistoric drawings show both power of observation and skill with the hand. Less ancient than these Stone Age carvings are the three colour paintings of animals discovered in a cave near Santander, in Spain. They are at least fifty thousand years old. This prehistoric art is interesting because it shows that man, in a very early stage of his development, was eager to produce accurate representation of the nature with which he was familiar, and it is suggestive to notice the resemblance between this ancient work and the rude sketches and designs of such backward races in the modern world as the Australians, the South African bushmen, and the Esquimaux.

As we approach historic times, the instinct to record the beauty of form, colour, and movement becomes more strongly developed. The artists of ancient Egypt, for example, were most concerned with truth of contour. The human form was always conventionalised, but the characteristic poses of both men and beasts were graphically represented. Each phase of civilisation, indeed, has produced its own form of art, and it is largely from these monuments of bygone generations that we are able to reconstruct the history of man.

The monumental sculptures of Assyria and Egypt remain a living force and influence, and we cannot trace the beginning and development of Christian art without paying tribute to the miraculous genius of Greece. Four centuries before Christ, the Greeks had brought sculpture to a point of perfection and physical beauty which has never since been surpassed, and though nothing now remains of the paintings of the Greek artists Zeuxis and Apelles, we know not only from contemporary appreciations but by the later wall-paintings of Pompeii and the memorial portraits of Alexandria that classical painting reached a high standard of realistic efficiency. Under the Roman Empire the traditions of the Greeks were kept alive and maintained,[1] if not actually reinvigorated, but with the decline and fall of Rome the fine arts were temporarily submerged in the collapse of the ancient world.

During the dark ages, painting, as a secular art, almost entirely disappeared, and in the early days of the Church the Fathers gave little encouragement to art. "Cursed be all who paint pictures" is a sentiment not infrequently found in their writings. This antagonism to the joyousness of pagan art was natural in men who regarded this world as a vale of tears and only important as a preparation for the life to come. The gloomy dogmatism of the new state religion of the Eastern Empire was satisfied with stiff formal mosaics for the basilicas of Constantinople. The brush was too flexible an instrument for rendering the personages of their iron creed, and these emblems of ecclesiastical authority, rather than of heavenly love, were stony both in substance and sentiment.

When the new Gothic races had settled down in conquered Italy, and Byzantine artists came over to decorate the interiors of the churches then building, they brought with them the frigid ceremonial ideals of the semi-oriental court from which they sprung.

[1] See wall-painting from Pompeii, "Ulysses and Penelope."

The matter but not the manner of their art was changed when altar-pieces and mural decorations began to be painted instead of being built up by little cubes of coloured stones. The figures in these paintings are raised, like mosaics, from a gold background, red and blue are still the prevailing colours of the draperies, and the faces retain the fixed, staring solemnity of Byzantine types. The infant Jesus is a little wizened old man, the adult Christ is portrayed as an awful Judge, not as a loving Shepherd, and there is never a trace of emotion in the countenance of the almond-eyed Madonna.

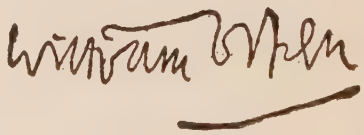
The history of modern art begins with St. Francis of Assisi, the most lovable of all the Christian saints. He, the first forerunner of the Renaissance, substituted a religion of love for the sterile authority of orthodoxy, and in his infinite charity brought divinity nearer not only to mankind but to all creation. The birds and the fishes are his little brothers and sisters, and like the Psalmist of old he calls the hills and the valleys, the rivers and the woods, to join him in praising God. In a word, by his teaching, religion was reconciled to nature, and with nature again piously occupying the minds of men, art could progress.

It was only gradually that these new ideas popularised by St. Francis penetrated to the surface of painting. First of all, the change is limited to human psychology. Madonnas become more human in expression, and saints lose their severity to take on a mild and benevolent aspect. But still their figures are shown against a gold background which serves to isolate them from all terrestrial objects. Then this gilded screen is lowered, and in its place a landscape fills the background, at first a rather barren landscape with a few rudimentary trees, but soon enriched with shrubs and flowers, and ultimately completed by the presence of our little brethren the birds and animals.

The first great master to break away from the fixed type of Byzantine art was the Florentine painter, Giovanni Cenni, commonly known as Cimabue. He was born in 1240 and died in

1302. In his work a great change is perceptible. If in type his Madonna still adheres to the Byzantine tradition as regards features, a new softness has crept into her face, the Infant Jesus is no longer wizened but tender and more childlike, while there is a touch of human kindness in the angels who bear them company. It is extremely interesting that Cimabue was commissioned to decorate the church which was the burial-place of St. Francis, and there he was assisted in the work by his apprentice, the famous Giotto. It is with Giotto, whose work was directly inspired by "the little brother of the poor," that we begin our story.

In the OUTLINE, there will be no attempt to print all the details of the history of art for six hundred years or to indulge in learned argument and criticism. We propose to reproduce as many as possible of the greatest pictures in the world and to say enough about their painters for the reader to understand what are their peculiar characteristics and what are the qualities of their work that make it beautiful and inspiring.



I

THE BIRTH OF MODERN PAINTING

THE BIRTH OF MODERN PAINTING

THE ART OF THE FLORENTINE MASTERS, FROM GIOTTO AND ANGELICO TO LIPPI AND BOTTICELLI

GIOTTO, a shepherd boy, was drawing pictures of his father's sheep on a slate, when Cimabue, the great artist of the time, happened to be passing by. Struck by the boy's talent, Cimabue obtained permission from his father and took the lad with him to Florence as his apprentice. When the artist was commissioned to decorate the church at Assisi, he entrusted his apprentice with painting the scenes from the life of St. Francis which were to adorn the walls of the upper church. In these frescoes the young Giotto proved himself, in the words of Ruskin, "a daring naturalist in defiance of tradition, idealism and formalism." Besides his work at Assisi, Giotto also worked at Rome, and important frescoes by him, notably "The Bewailing of St. Francis" and "Herod's Birthday Feast," are in S. Croce at Florence, but the greatest and most famous of all his undertakings is the series of frescoes which he painted in the Chapel of the Arena at Padua. The date of this enterprise can be fixed with some certainty because it is known that in 1306 Dante was Giotto's guest at Padua, and the poet is said to have assisted the painter in his choice of subjects. Petrarch was also the friend of Giotto.

It is interesting to compare Cimabue's "Madonna and Child" and his pupil's "The Bewailing of St. Francis," both reproduced here. To be fair to the elder artist, we must remember what came

before. We have only to look at Margaritone's altar-piece in the National Gallery to see the oppressive type of Byzantine art, destitute of any feeling for beauty or truth to nature. From whom Cimabue received his training we know not—there was no famous painter before him—but we do know he was held in high esteem by his contemporaries. The "Madonna" he painted for S. Maria Novella aroused such enthusiasm that it was carried to the church preceded by trumpeters and followed by a procession of Florentines. But whatever the advance made by Cimabue, Giotto advanced still further.

§ 1

The Art of Giotto

If we study Cimabue's "Madonna" at the National Gallery we find that his figures, though not entirely lifeless as the heavily gilded Byzantine figures, are wooden, formal, and conventional, while Giotto's figures have individuality and human feeling and his groups have a new realism and dramatic vigour. Giotto had a more extended range of colour than Cimabue; he showed a preference for gayer and lighter schemes, and he gave a more careful imitation of nature than existed in the works of his predecessors. When we hail Giotto as a daring naturalist, we must think of him in relation to the artists who preceded him, and not to those later painters who gradually learnt to give accurate and complete expression to the truths of nature. Yet his Paduan frescoes show, as it has been well said, "the highest powers of the Italian mind and hand at the beginning of the fourteenth century." Although a shepherd in his youth, it is strange that his drawings of sheep do not appear correct to modern eyes.

As will be seen from his "The Bewailing of St. Francis," his backgrounds, though in a sense true to nature, are not realistic. His buildings and his trees are far too small, being drawn neither in true perspective nor in correct proportion to the human figures.

Photo: Anderson.

"THE BEWAILING OF ST. FRANCIS," BY GIOTTO (*circa* 1266–1337)

Santa Croce, Florence.

It is remarkable that St. Francis, the great apostle of Humanity, influenced the Italian artists who brought back humanity to painting after the long period of Byzantine artificiality that followed the fall of the Roman Empire.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"THE ANNUNCIATION," BY FRA FILIPPO LIPPI (1406–69)

National Gallery, London.

An example of Lippi's decorative power, enlivened by accurate nature study. It will be noticed, however, on comparing this work with Angelico's rendering of the same subject, that Lippi, notwithstanding his increased technical dexterity, is less spiritual in his treatment and fails to express the devotional piety found in the work of his master.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"ULYSSES AND PENELOPE"

Wall painting from Pompeii.

One of the few existing examples of Roman painting, showing the high standard of realism reached in classical art.

His hills are bare and jagged cliffs, his trees have only a dozen leaves for foliage; but it was an innovation for fields, trees, and animals to appear at all, and no imperfections in their rendering can rob the painter of the glory of having extended the subject-matter of his art. Giotto was the first Gothic painter to depict action, to substitute the dramatic human life for the eternal repose of the divine. To his contemporaries his realism must have seemed amazing, and we can understand Boccaccio, after looking at earlier Byzantine paintings, writing enthusiastically in the *Decamerone:*

> Giotto was such a genius that there was nothing in nature which he could not have represented in such a manner that it not only resembled, but seemed to be, the thing itself.

Giotto was not only a painter: he was also an architect. When he returned to Florence in 1334 the city honoured him and itself by appointing him Master of the Works of the Cathedral. Two great architectural works were planned and begun by him at Florence, the West Front of the Cathedral and its detached Campanile or bell-tower. The latter—of which we give a reproduction—exists to this day as a monument of his genius, although its author did not live to see its completion. But its lower courses were completed from Giotto's design, and he was able with his own hand to carve the first course of its sculptured ornaments, illustrating arts and industries, before he died on January 8, 1337.

Giotto was the first of the great Florentine painters. Among his immediate successors was Andrea Orcagna, whose famous "The Coronation of the Virgin" is in the National Gallery. Orcagna was painter, sculptor, architect, and poet. More of a dreamer than his shrewd practical predecessor, Orcagna did not so much develop the realistic side of Giotto as refine and intensify his psychology. He carried on the Giottesque tradition of truth and simplicity, but drama and action appealed to him less power-

fully than the expression of emotion and deep religious feeling. In his masterpieces we are arrested not by any movement, but by the variety and intensity of the feelings expressed in the figures.

> "In the work of Orcagna," Ruskin writes, "an intense solemnity and energy in the sublimest groups of his figures, fading away as he touches inferior subjects, indicates that his home was among the archangels, and his rank among the first of the sons of men."

This religious intensity led to a greater formality than is found in Giotto and to a curious suggestion of a return to Byzantine lack of humanity.

§ 2

Duccio

While Giotto was laying the foundations of the art of Florence, another school of painting arose in the quiet hill city of Sienna. Its founder, Duccio di Buoninsegna, is said to have been so much influenced by the Byzantine style that he has been called "the last of the great artists of antiquity," as opposed to Giotto the "father of modern painting." It is not easy to understand this comment if one looks at Duccio's pictures, one of the most famous of which—"The Kiss of Judas"—we reproduce. In spite of their colour and their gilding the figures are human and life-like, and the picture reflects human emotion entirely in accord with the spirit of St. Francis. There is so much sweetness and grace in the paintings of Duccio and his fellows that they have been called the first lyric painters of modern art.

Among his younger contemporaries the most gifted was Simone Martini (*c.* 1283–1344), whose work has the pensive devoutness that marks Siennese painting and a gay decorative charm. There is a picture by him at Oxford, and another in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, but perhaps his greatest

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"MADONNA AND CHILD ENTHRONED," BY CIMABUE (1240–1302).

National Gallery, London.

In Cimabue is seen the first sign of the softening of the Byzantine stiffness, shown in the expression on the face of the Virgin in this picture, and also in the more lifelike treatment of the Child. The gilt background, however, is still artificial, and we do not feel that the Virgin is really sitting on the formal throne. Note also the want of proportion between the Virgin and the angels who are supposed to surround her.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

GIOTTO'S TOWER, FLORENCE

Architect and sculptor, as well as painter, Giotto is an example of the mediæval artists' universality.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"PORTRAIT OF JOHN HAWKWOOD," BY PAOLO UCCELLO (1397–1475)

Cathedral, Florence.

This equestrian portrait, in addition to its artistic merit, shown in the lifelike painting of the horse, is interesting as representing a famous English mercenary soldier, the son of an Essex tanner, who first went to the Continent with the English army that fought at Crècy.

achievement is the series of frescoes at Avignon. These were once attributed to Giotto, but are now recognised to have been the work of Simone Martini and his school. Among other Siennese artists the brothers Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti are noted for the dramatic vigour in their work.

In the Florentine painting of the fifteenth century, the impulse towards naturalism, first given by Giotto branched out in two opposite directions. One was psychic, the other physical. The expression of intense and strong emotion, together with action and movement, was the aim of one school; another strove after realistic probability and correctness of representation. This second school, pushed on by its love of truth, attacked and vanquished one by one various problems of technique. The approach to a closer representation of the appearance of realities involved three main inquiries: (1) the study of perspective, linear and aerial; (2) the study of anatomy, of nude bodies in repose and action; and (3) the detailed truth of facts in objects animate and inanimate.

§ 3

Fra Angelico

The most considerable figure in Florence after Orcagna was the Dominican monk Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, known as Fra Angelico (1387–1455), who belonged essentially to the psychic or spiritual school, and only approached the physical in his loving observation of nature. Here he was an innovator, for his eye dwells on gentle aspects, and in his landscape backgrounds he introduces pleasing forms of mountains and verdant meadows multicoloured with the budding flowers of spring. Indeed, all his painting is flower-like, but this delicate naturalism does not determine its character. It is the soulful quality of his work which gives it supreme distinction. The unworldliness of his art is explained partly by his cloistered existence and the fact that

he lived until his fiftieth year in the little hill towns of Cortona and Fiesole. He led a holy and retired life, and, like St. Francis, was a little brother to the poor.

If Fra Angelico had his excellencies, he also had his limitations. His angels are so beautiful that, as Vasari wrote, "they appear to be truly beings of Paradise." But his devils inspire us with no terror; they are too harmless and self-evidently ashamed of their profession to be anything but ludicrous.

> "His pictures of martyrdom," says Muther, "create the impression of boys disguised as martyrs and executioners; and his bearded men, weeping like women, are equally incredible. But when he does not leave his proper sphere, and the problem is to portray tender feelings, a great and silent joy of the heart, a holy ecstasy or tender sadness, his pictures have the effect of the silent prayer of a child."

His frescoes in San Marco at Florence and in the Vatican at Rome remain the most enchanting visions of the heavenly world, a world he decked with bright joyful colours culled from the flower gardens of earth. Some idea of Fra Angelico's careful and tender art may be gathered from his "Annunciation," which we reproduce.

§ 4

In the expression of feeling, the most famous follower of Fra Angelico was Fra Filippo Lippi, but if unable to attain the ethereal spirituality of Angelico his art was full of humanity and delicacy. His Madonnas belong to Florence rather than to heaven and reveal the painter's fine feeling for feminine beauty more obviously than his piety. He was a genial painter, and in his comfortable satisfaction with the things of this life he shared with Angelico a love of flowers. "No one draws such lilies or such daisies as Lippi," wrote Ruskin. "Botticelli beat him afterwards in roses, but never in lilies."

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"THE KISS OF JUDAS," BY DUCCIO (*circa* 1260–1339)
Museum, Sienna.

Note the introduction of a natural background in the pioneer work of this early Siennese master

Photo: Anderson.

"THE CALUMNY OF APELLES" (DETAIL), BY BOTTICELLI (1444–1510)

This striking presentment of Calumny, typified by a black-cowled hag, retreating defeated from the pure presence of the naked Truth, is at once a brilliant re-creation of a lost picture by the famous Greek artist Apelles, who flourished in the fifth century B.C., and is also an expression of Botticelli's indignation against those who calumniated the great preacher Savonarola, even after his martyrdom. It represents the culmination of the painter's devotion to Greek art and the beginning of his submission to the teaching of the fanatical friar.

Lippi's geniality is very evident in his "Annunciation," which we reproduce. The figures are human, the scene is homely, characteristics generally suggestive of the Dutch painters of a much later generation.

Fra Angelico and Fra Lippi stand for the imaginative development that followed the death of Giotto. In the other direction, the first great advance in the rendering of physical nature is found in the painting of Paolo Uccello, who first introduced perspective into pictures. Uccello was far more interested in the technical problems of foreshortening and perspective than in anything else. Uccello represents the scientific spirit in the air of the Florence of Cosmo de' Medici, where not only artists, but mathematicians, anatomists, and great scholars were congregated. Among his achievements must be reckoned the recommencement of profane painting by his invention of the battle picture, a subject in which he had no predecessor and no successor till a century later. His early battle piece, the "Sant' Egidio," [1] amuses us by the rockinghorse appearance of the horses. In his absorption with technique, Uccello was indifferent then to realistic accuracy. Truths of colour did not interest him—he painted horses red. The third dimension in space, which Giotto could only suggest experimentally and symbolically, was conquered by Uccello, who clearly separated the planes in which his figures move and have their being. Roses, oranges, and hedges were drawn with botanical precision, and no pains were spared to draw branches and even leaves in correct perspective. The splendid realism to which Uccello ultimately attained is best represented by the intensely alive animal and its rider in the picture we reproduce. Uccello's equestrian portrait of the English mercenary John Hawkwood in the cathedral of Florence is a milestone in the history of art.

[1] Though commonly known by this title, Uccello's masterpiece at the National Gallery is now held to represent the Rout of San Romano, 1432.

§ 5

Sandro Botticelli

Romantic mysticism, which budded with Fra Angelico, passed by Lippi to flower with all sweetness and beauty in the art of his pupil, Alessandro Filipepi, famed as Botticelli. Sandro Botticelli was born in Florence about 1447, and was first apprenticed to a goldsmith. To the end of his life he was a jeweller in colours, but owes little beside the name of Botticelli, by which we know him, to his goldsmith master, whom he soon left, to devote himself thenceforth entirely to painting. The thing that differentiates the art of Botticelli from that of all his predecessors is the intensely personal, even egotistical note that he strikes in all his work. The exquisite, delicate melancholy which pervades the expression, both of Christian saints and Pagan gods, in all his pictures, is his own, not theirs, as though he were sorry for them for being saints and gods, and so, by their very nature, deprived of all those ecstasies alike of faith and of doubt, of conviction and speculation, which are the compensating privileges of human imperfection.

The Italy of Botticelli was not the Italy of Fra Angelico. Beauty was no longer the handmaid of religion. The Church was no longer the only patron of art, nor were church walls the only outlet for artists. Cosimo de' Medici and Lorenzo the Magnificent did not worry their painters with theological restrictions; it was beauty that they wanted. It was not till his master Lippi left Florence in 1467 to undertake a commission at Spoleto, that Botticelli began to develop his own individuality. Pictures before that date, as "The Adoration of the Magi" in the National Gallery, reflect the art of Lippi. But as soon as the young painter was left alone in Florence, he mixed with other artists like the Pollaiuoli, who had greater knowledge of anatomy than Lippi, and his art made rapid progress. On another page is shown one of the most beautiful of these early

Photo: Mansell.

"JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOPHERNES," BY BOTTICELLI

Judith, the saviour of her country, is seen here after leaving the tent of Holophernes. The sword is still in her hand, and behind her strides the maidservant bearing the head of the tyrant whom Judith has slain. In the landscape background the discomfited army of Holophernes is shown retreating in confusion across a spacious landscape. This comparatively early work shows the graciousness of Botticelli's conception of womanhood and his power of rendering human beings and landscape with convincing truth.

Photo: Rischgitz Collection.

"THE ANNUNCIATION," BY FRA ANGELICO (1387–1455)

St. Mark's, Florence.

The note of sweetness and simplicity introduced onward by Giotto is developed with appealing charm by Fra Angelico. Note the construction of the columns and the flowered background; also the religious devotion expressed in the thoughtful countenances of the Virgin and the angel.

works, "Judith with the Head of Holophernes." Muscular action is finely expressed in the swinging stride of the maid who follows bearing the head of the slain tyrant, while the heroine herself is depicted with all the fresh girlish charm of one of the young Florentine maids who frequented the artist's studio. In the distance the great army of invasion is seen retreating in confusion through a spacious landscape.

Botticelli's chief patron in Florence was not Lorenzo the Magnificent, but a distant kinsman of the Duke with the same name. For the villa at Castello, belonging to this younger Lorenzo de' Medici, Botticelli painted a number of pictures, among them, about 1477, the famous "Primavera." No more beautiful allegory of the coming of Spring has ever been painted than this picture, of which we give a reproduction. In the centre Venus, the Goddess of Love, awaits Spring's coming, with Cupid hovering over her. On her right are the Three Graces, with Mercury, the Messenger of the Gods; on her left gaily-decked Spring advances, gently pushed forward by Flora, the goddess of flowers, and by Zephyr, who personifies the mild west wind. Where'er she treads the flowers spring to life. Beautiful as an interpretation of old Greek legends, which make a human story out of all the phenomena of nature, this picture is also an expression of the revived pagan delight in physical form which was typical of fifteenth-century Florence.

The fame of this and other pictures by Botticelli spread to Rome, whither in 1481 he was summoned by the Pope to assist in the decoration of the Sistine Chapel, where three great frescoes, the "History of Moses," "Destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram," and "Temptation of Christ," remain to this day as a monument of his skill, his energy, and his sense of drama and beauty. After two years in Rome, Botticelli returned to Florence, where, in 1483, he painted the most exquisite of all his Madonnas, "The Magnificat," which we present as a colour-plate. But the happy days of the painter were drawing to an

end. After the death of Lorenzo in 1492 and the accession of his worthless son Piero, Florence was agitated by political troubles; and to that city, tired of pleasure and weary of knowledge, came Girolamo Savonarola, the great reformer priest.

When the Medici were expelled from Florence, the young Lorenzo went with them, and Botticelli lost his best patron. During these tumultuous years Botticelli devoted much of his time to executing a wonder-series of illustrations to Dante, the originals of which are still preserved in the Vatican Library and the Berlin Museum. These drawings reveal not only an intimate knowledge of the great poem, but also a profound sympathy with the feelings of the poet. Savonarola preached and Botticelli listened, though happily he did not follow the example of some of his contemporaries and burn his earlier pictures of pagan subjects. Though his brother Simone, who lived with him in these later years, was a fanatical disciple of Savonarola, Sandro himself does not appear to have been wholly converted till the great preacher in turn became the victim of the fury of a fickle populace.

In the same year (1498) in which Savonarola was burned at the stake in the Piazza della Signoria, Botticelli painted his great picture, "The Calumny of Apelles." This work, which we reproduce, had a double purpose. Nominally it was an attempt to reproduce a famous lost picture, "Calumny," by the ancient Greek painter Apelles, from the description of it given by the Greek writer Lucian. But we can have little doubt that the inward and spiritual meaning of this picture, which shows black-robed Calumny (or, according to another interpretation, Remorse) slinking from the radiant presence of the naked Truth, was directed against the calumniators of the martyred friar. Among all Botticelli's pictures this painting is distinguished by its exquisite finish and richness of detail, and we may regard it as the last great expression of his powers both as a classic and a humanist. Distressed both by the disturbed state of his native city and by the tragic end of Savonarola, Botti-

Photo: Hanfstaengl

"THE MOURNING FOR CHRIST," BY BOTTICELLI

In this picture we have an extreme example of the tragic element introduced into Botticelli's last works due to his meditation on the gloomy preaching of Savonarola. There is a strained affectation in the poses of the Apostles which suggests that this picture was finished by pupils after Botticelli's death, but the tense feeling expressed in the central group is entirely in the master's last manner, though only the sweet face of the Magdalene, who is tenderly lifting the feet of Christ, remains to remind us of the earlier Botticelli, whose sole aim was the expression of beauty.

Photo: Anderson.

"SPRING," BY BOTTICELLI

In the exquisite allegory of the coming of Spring the vernal season is personified by a brightly garmented maiden who is being gently pushed forward by Flora, the goddess of flowers, and Zephyr, the west wind, presiding her as a herald (on the extreme left) is Mercury, the messenger of the gods. In the centre Venus, goddess of Love, welcomes Spring's coming, while, hovering over her head, Cupid aims his arrow at the Three Graces.

celli fretted himself into melancholia during his last years. The few religious pictures of this period which remain—many of them probably finished by pupils after the master's death—contain a strange exaggeration of gesture and facial expression and an almost theatrical vehemence of action, which are entirely foreign to the poetical fantasies of his earlier manner. As an example of the high-strung emotions of his last years, "The Mourning of Christ" may be compared in these pages with the serene tranquillity of Botticelli's early and middle-period work. The happiest painting of his last period is the little "Nativity" in the National Gallery.

II

THE INVENTION OF OIL-PAINTING

THE INVENTION OF OIL-PAINTING

THE ART OF THE VAN EYCKS, MEMLINC, AND THE EARLY FLEMISH MASTERS

§ 1

IN the whole history of painting there are no more remarkable figures than the two brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck. Never before or since has Art made so mighty a stride in the space of one generation. We get some idea of what they achieved if we compare any King or Queen in a pack of playing cards with a modern photograph of a living monarch.

Just as Molière's "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" was astounded to find he had been talking prose all his life without knowing it, so some readers may be surprised to learn that they are perfectly familiar with mediæval Gothic art, for examples of it may be found in every pack of playing cards, in which the court cards are survivals of mediæval Gothic portraiture.

"The King of Hearts"

To obtain the best possible insight into the birth of Gothic art one ought to visit the Cathedral of Brunswick. Here we may see what are probably the best-preserved examples of mediæval wall-paintings. In the choir is a series of pictures, painted about the beginning of the thirteenth century, and one of the best of these represents "Herod's Birthday Feast." It is perfectly childish, of course, but it is childish in a totally different way from that

in which the pictures of Giotto and Angelico are childish. Neither the Italian nor the Brunswick pictures show any sense of perspective or give any real effect of space and distance; but the treatment of the figures greatly differs. In the Italian paintings there is still a faint trace of Greek draughtsmanship distorted by Byzantine dogma, but the Brunswick paintings show quite a new conception of the human body which has nothing to do with Greece or Rome; it is *pure Gothic.* In these Brunswick paintings the people pictured look like nothing so much as a row of court cards. Herod himself looks as much like a real human being as the King of Hearts looks like H.M. King George V.

Now we are in a position to appreciate the art of the brothers Van Eyck. To realise the advance they made we must not compare their figures with the portraits of to-day or modern photographs, but with the Queen of Spades and the Jack of Diamonds. And we must remember that little over a hundred years separates the style of court-card portraiture from the realistic forms of Hubert's mighty figures surmounting "The Adoration of the Lamb" and Jan van Eyck's "The Man with the Pinks." Think of the court cards when you look at the illustrations of these paintings.

It is a great misfortune that we know so little about the lives of these amazing men. Many interesting details about the early Italian artists have been preserved to us because Giorgio Vasari, himself an early sixteenth-century Florentine painter, wrote the lives of the preceding and contemporary Italian artists with a fullness and vivacity which make his accounts still fascinating and readable. But there was no biographer of the early Flemish artists, and the few meagre facts we know about them have slowly been unearthed by patient scholarship toiling amid the archives of the cities in which these artists lived.

Therefore it is by the pictures which remain, rather than by any written record, that we must endeavour to reconstruct the flowering of art in Flanders and Northern Europe. But if we

"THE ADORATION OF THE LAMB," CENTRAL PANELS OF ALTAR-PIECE BY HUBERT AND JAN VAN EYCK

Though dating from the days when oil-painting was first invented, this gigantic altar-piece—the painted surface of which extends to over 1,000 square feet—has in many respects never been surpassed. In its original form it consisted of the centre panel, from which the whole takes its name, surmounted by three panels representing (from left to right) the Virgin Mary, God the Father, and St. John. These three figures are certainly the work of Hubert. This portion, all that now remains in the Cathedral at Ghent, is shown above: but originally the polyptych was completed on either side by two tiers of two panels each. Of these two are now at Brussels and six are in the Berlin Museum.

Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"THE JUST JUDGES," BY HUBERT AND JAN VAN EYCK

Ghent Cathedral.

Originally this panel and the one accompanying hung on the left of "The Adoration of the Lamb." According to tradition, the judge in a black garment with a red rosary, who is turning towards the spectator, is a portrait of Jan van Eyck himself, and his mourning attire is generally held to confirm the theory that he finished this painting after the death of his brother Hubert.

Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"CHRIST'S WARRIORS," BY HUBERT AND JAN VAN EYCK

Ghent Cathedral.

The subject of this picture reminds us that to Hubert van Eyck and his brother the Crusades were a living memory. To them the gallant if fruitless campaigns of St. Louis of France were a "grandfather's tale," not much further distant than the Waterloo Campaign is to us.

Few of the warriors here shown have been definitely identified, but it is thought that the second soldier on the extreme left of the second rank is John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, while next to him in a fur cap is Godfrey de Bouillon, the first King of Jerusalem.

do study those works, then it is positively electrifying to behold the mysterious and rapid quickening of the artistic spirit in Flanders.

Of what came between the paintings of Brunswick Cathedral and the art of the Van Eycks, little is known and nothing certain. The very names of the painters of some undoubtedly early pictures are unknown, and all we can say with certainty is that from about the end of the fourteenth century to the middle of the fifteenth century a group of painters flourished on the lower Rhine and became known as the School of Cologne. Several of its members are merely legendary, but the *Bimburg Chronicle* of 1380 contains an authoritative entry: "In this time there was a painter in Cologne of the name of Wilhelm; he was considered the best master in all German Land; he paints every man, of whatever form, as if he were alive." This master has been identified as William of Herle (or Cologne) who died about 1378, and though he evidently impressed his contemporaries by his pioneer realism the work of his school is esteemed in our own time for its spiritual calm and peaceful purity. "St. Veronica" in the National Gallery is probably painted by William of Cologne or by one of his pupils.

Now Hubert van Eyck was born about 1365 near Maestricht, which is no great distance from Cologne. Most probably he studied in the Rhineland capital before he migrated to Flanders and, with his brother Jan, settled in Ghent. The increasing commercial prosperity of Bruges and Ghent attracted artists from the banks of the Rhine, and the School of Cologne declined as the Early Flemish School arose.

The Great Discovery

Since the time of Vasari, the brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck have generally received credit for having discovered oil as a medium for painting. Before their time artists had mixed their colours either with water (frescoes) or with yolk of egg

(tempera paintings), and though modern scholarship is inclined to doubt whether the Van Eycks were actually the first to make use of oil, they were beyond question the pioneers of the new medium.

Tradition says that Jan, having one day "devoted the utmost pains" in finishing a picture with great care, varnished it and as usual put it in the sun to dry. But the heat was excessive and split the wooden panel which he had painted. Grieving at the destruction of his handiwork, Jan "determined to find a means whereby he should be spared such an annoyance in the future." After various experiments he discovered that linseed oil and oil of nuts dried more quickly than any which he had tried, and that colours mixed with these oils were more brilliant, proof against water, and blended far better than the tempera. Thus was oil-painting invented.

"The Adoration of the Lamb" at Ghent, executed by the two brothers, is not only the earliest monument of the art of oil-painting but it is the most splendid masterpiece produced by any Northern artist before the seventeenth century. Not till Rubens was born, some 200 years later, did Flanders produce the equal of the Van Eycks, and from this fact alone we may deduce the extraordinary mastery of their art.

"The Adoration of the Lamb," an elaborate polyptych, is not one picture but a whole collection of pictures. Originally it consisted of the long central panel showing "The Adoration of the Lamb" and above this three panels of "The Virgin," "God the Father," and "St. John" (all shown in our illustration); on the left of the "Lamb" panel—which measures 7¼ feet long by 4½ feet high—were two panels of "The Just Judges" and "Christ's Warriors" (see opposite page 25), and these were balanced by panels showing "The Holy Hermits" and "The Holy Pilgrims" on the right. On the upper tier the three central figures were flanked by two double-panelled shutters, the painted subjects on one side being "Angels Singing," "Angels Making

Photo: Bruckmann.

"THE MAN WITH THE PINKS," BY JAN VAN EYCK (*circa* 1385–1441)

Berlin Museum.

Painted about 500 years ago by one of the first artists to use oil paint, this picture astounds us to-day by its lifelike realism, by its unswerving fidelity to every little detail that can help to give the character of a man and set his living presence before us. Note how the brocade collar of the tunic, showing above the fur collar of the coat, seems to be ornamented with the alternating letters Y and C. It is hoped these may one day afford a clue to the identity of the sitter, who is at present unknown. The bell which, with a cross, hangs by a twisted chain from his neck, suggests that St. Anthony was the patron saint of the person represented.

(1) ST. URSULA ARRIVING AT COLOGNE

(2) THE PILGRIMS ARRIVING AT BASLE

(3) THE POPE AND PILGRIMS EMBARK AT BASLE

(4) THE MARTYRDOM OF THE PILGRIMS

"THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. URSULA," BY MEMLINC (*circa* 1430–94)

Hospital of St. John, Bruges.

Memlinc's "Shrine of St. Ursula," in the Hospital of St. John at Bruges, is one of the art wonders of the world. It is an oblong gabled casket, the sides of which are adorned with six miniatures illustrating the legend of St. Ursula. Four of these are shown above. At the ends are "The Virgin and Child with two nuns" and "St. Ursula with Ten Companions"; on the roof are medallions showing "The Coronation of the Virgin," "St. Ursula and her Companions," and four angel-musicians.

The whole casket only measures 3 ft. in length, 2 ft. 10 in. in height, and 1 ft. 1 in. in breadth.

Music," and, at the extreme ends, "Adam" and "Eve"; on the reverse of the shutters are "St. John the Baptist," "St. John the Evangelist," "Jodoc Vydt"—the donor of the altar-piece—and "Wife of Jodoc Vydt."

A Thousand Feet of Paint

The complete altar-piece therefore consisted of twelve panels, four painted on both sides, making sixteen pictures in all. The whole painted surface of this composite picture, or polyptych, amounts to over a thousand feet. Only "The Adoration of the Lamb" and the three panels immediately above it remain in the Cathedral of Ghent. The "Adam" and the "Eve" are at Brussels, and all the other panels are now in the Berlin Museum.

The whole altar-piece was undoubtedly planned and begun by Hubert, who certainly painted the three tremendous central figures and the panel of "Angels Making Music." After Hubert's death in 1426 Jan van Eyck completed the altar-piece, and probably did not adhere altogether strictly to his brother's original designs. The difference between the work of the two brothers is one not so much of skill as of temperament. Hubert possessed a solemn spirituality and serious thoughtfulness which was not shared by his more worldly younger brother.

Jan van Eyck, born about 1385, is a more popular and no less eminent figure than his elder brother. He lived on in Ghent and Bruges till 1441 and his works are comparatively numerous, whereas few paintings by Hubert are extant. Shortly before completing the Ghent altar-piece, Jan entered the service of Philip of Burgundy, for whom he undertook several diplomatic missions. In this way he saw Portugal and other foreign countries, and his later paintings betray his affectionate remembrance of the country he had seen in southern climes. Jan was essentially a realist, with his keen gaze ever fixed on the beautiful earth and on human beings rather than on religious doctrines. His real bent is shown in many of his panels for

"The Adoration of the Lamb." In the panel of "The Annunciation" his delight in the still-life, in the wash-basin and other furniture of the room, in the street view seen through the window, reveals him to be the true Father of genre painting. His protraits of Jodoc Vydt and his wife, shown without flattery as a dull but prosperous Flemish burgher and his wife, prove him to be the Father of modern portraiture. Both these qualities, his capacity for realistic portraiture and his infinite exactitude in rendering the detail of an interior, are magnificently displayed in our illustration, "Jan Arnolfini and his Wife" (opposite page 34), one of the most precious things in the National Gallery.

While Hubert belongs to the austere company of monumental or architectural painters, Jan is a pioneer of domestic painting and one of the first producers of what we now know as a "picture." In this development Jan van Eyck was, doubtless unconsciously, meeting the demand of his time and place.

In Northern churches and cathedrals, which need more light than the Southern, the place occupied by wall-paintings was gradually given over to stained-glass windows, which are marked features in the Gothic architecture of Northern Europe. Wall-paintings, which still led the way in Italy, became secondary in Flanders to the decorative panels introduced into wooden screen-work. This much accomplished, it was a short step to meet the demands of a prosperous commercial community by (metaphorically) detaching a panel from its ecclesiastical frame and adapting its subject and style to a private dwelling-house.

Thus, while Italy remains the home of the religious picture, Flanders and the Netherlands become more and more the home of secular art. Though he painted other religious subjects beside "The Adoration of the Lamb" and the miniature "Altar-piece" which the Emperor Charles V took with him on his travels, the most famous of the other paintings by Jan van Eyck are portraits. In his portraiture he is uncompromising in his endeavour to state the whole truth; such details as warts and wrinkles, fur-

"THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. URSULA," BY MEMLINC

Hospital of St. John, Bruges.

This illustration, about half the size of the original painting, illustrates the final episode in the story of St. Ursula. Accompanied by a maiden and one of the Pope's suite, the Saint stands undismayed before the general of the Huns and, refusing to deny her faith almly awaits death by the arrow which an archer is ready to let fly. It is characteristic of Memlinc's gentleness and delicacy of feeling that he has preferred suggesting the Saint's martyrdom to painting the Saint's death with the grim realism which we find in the works of other Flemish masters.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE DUKE OF CLEVE," BY MEMLINC

National Gallery, London.

The grace and spirituality of this picture admirably illustrate the portraiture of Memlinc, who, it has been said, "saw not only with his eyes but with his soul

rows and stubbly beards, he renders with passionate delight and exactitude. A splendid example of Jan's rugged realism may be seen in our illustration from the portrait, in the Berlin Museum, known as "The Man with the Pinks" (opposite page 26). Precisely drawn, true to every wart and wrinkle, the face is so full of life and character that we almost listen for speech to come from the slightly parted lips. Who this man was has never been discovered, but from his costume and the handsome ring on his finger we may deduce that he was a person of position.

§ 2

If little is known about the Van Eycks, still less is known concerning their successors. Patient research among municipal records in Flanders, however, has greatly increased our knowledge during recent years. Twenty years ago the very name of the painter of a fine altar-piece in the Abbey of Flemalle, near Liège, was uncertain; he was alluded to vaguely as "The Master of Flemalle." To-day it has been established that he was a painter of Tournai, called Robert Campin, who was born about 1375 and lived till 1444. There are two good examples of his art in the National Gallery, and he is important, not only for his own work, but as being the master of Roger van der Weyden.

Among religious painters Roger van der Weyden (*c.* 1400-64), who was born at Tournai and settled in Brussels, had a considerable influence. Besides the calm solemnity of Hubert van Eyck, his pictures appear exaggerated in their dramatic intensity and fervour. He was essentially a tragic artist, dwelling on the sufferings of the Saviour and peopling his pictures with wailing figures, whose emaciated faces stream with tears, whose hands are convulsively clutched in agony or outstretched to heaven. In 1450 he visited Rome and is thought to have had some influence on Ferrarese and Paduan painting, and there he in turn may have imbibed something of a new spirit, for towards

the end of his life his sentiment became more gentle and refined. Van der Weyden is seen at his best in "The Bewailing of the Body of Christ" in the Berlin Gallery, and in this picture his affinity with the school of Van Eyck is shown in the delicate and gently detailed landscape background.

Roger's fellow-pupil Jacques Daret, who died in 1466, is softer and more conciliatory in his religious themes, and his paintings are peculiarly sweet both in colour and temper.

Tragedy and Remorse

The tragic painting of Van der Weyden was continued by Hugo van der Goes (*c.* 1435-82) of Ghent and Bruges, who is reputed to have begun life as a wild pleasure-lover. Suddenly he withdrew to a monastery near Brussels, and conscience-stricken at his own dissipation he henceforward devoted his talent to sacred subjects, usually accentuating the sorrows of Christ, but always avoiding the wailing and excessive gesticulation which marked the pictures of Van der Weyden. His art is deeper and more quiet, but is certainly not less expressive. The altar-piece with "The Adoration of Jesus" which, under the orders of Portinari, agent for the Medici in Bruges, he painted for Santa Maria Nuova in Florence, is generally accepted as the supreme masterpiece of Hugo van der Goes. We see the continuation of the Van Eyck tradition in the glimpse of landscape, in which light-green branches are boldly contrasted with the deep-blue sky, in the naturalism of the fire-red lily in the foreground, and in the realism of the rough, weather-beaten shepherds who on one side balance the sturdy figure of St. Joseph, who stands praying, on the other. When this picture, which we illustrate (facing page 35), arrived in Florence, it created a great sensation, and it has been thought that many famous Italian artists, among them Piero di Cosimo, Ghirlandaio, Piero Pollaiuolo, were influenced to the extent of changing their style after they had seen this masterpiece by Hugo van der Goes.

Photo. Annan & Sons.

"MARGARET TUDOR," BY MABUSE *(about 1472–1535)*

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY, EDINBURGH.

"A rogue in porcelain"—George Meredith, [illegible] Royal Beauty, the eldest daughter of Henry VII. [illegible] allowed the eyes to betray the real heartbreak that [illegible] Henry VIII.

It is [illegible] to which the French painter devoted [illegible] and [illegible]

§ 3

Romantic Memlinc

The first great figure in Flemish painting who appears to owe little to either of the Van Eycks is Hans Memlinc (*c.* 1430-94), who probably studied at Cologne before he settled in Bruges about 1467. His paintings in the Hospital of St. John at Bruges are world-famous, and round them has been woven a pretty legend.

Young Memlinc, the story goes, while fighting as a soldier of Charles the Bold, was desperately wounded and dragged himself to the Hospital of St. John at Bruges, where he was kindly received and his wounds tended. When cured, out of gratitude and for no fee, he painted the pictures still to be seen in the hospital.

Unfortunately historical research has demolished the legend and reveals Memlinc as no soldier of fortune but as a prosperous citizen and house-owner in Bruges. Yet the legend well accords with the character of Memlinc's paintings, which have been likened to "the visions of a sick man in convalescence."

Just as the name of Michael Angelo is indissolubly linked to the Sistine Chapel in Rome, so is that of Memlinc to the Hospital of St. John at Bruges. But while we are awed by the heroic figures and magnitude of the Italian's paintings at Rome, in Bruges we are fascinated and bewitched by the bijou qualities of the Fleming's art. Memlinc's large triptych in the Hospital, "The Virgin and Child Enthroned," with panels on either side of "St. John the Baptist" and of "St. John the Evangelist at Patmos," is not the work that takes our breath away: it is the "Shrine of St. Ursula," a wonderfully painted casket—made to hold relics of the saint. Though only 3 feet long and less than 3 feet high, this casket is covered with eight panel paintings, and six medallions on the roof slopes. Five of the scenes illustrating

the story of St. Ursula are reproduced (facing pages 27 and 28), and the beauty of their workmanship is manifest.

The Story of St. Ursula

Looking at these poetical pictures of a romantic story, it seems ungracious to recall that the legend of St. Ursula, according to modern science, rests on no surer foundation than the discovery in mediæval times of an old Roman burial-ground. From these unknown remains, it is now said, the tale of Ursula and her 11,000 virgins was constructed. Many versions of the legend are in existence; but none nearer than five or six centuries to the date when the events were supposed to have happened. This is the version followed by Memlinc:

Ursula, daughter of a King of Brittany or Cornwall, either to delay marriage with a pagan prince, or alternately to escape the persecution of the British Emperor Maximian, was enjoined to go on a pilgrimage and make eleven thousand virgins her companions. The company sailed up the Rhine via Cologne to Basle, and thence went by foot to Rome, where they were received by the Pope with every honour and attention. Returning, they sailed down the Rhine from Basle with papal benedictions, but on arriving at Cologne they were slaughtered by the Huns. After the martyrdom, their relics were piously collected and buried.

That is the story, and it will be noted that Memlinc, to show how absolutely the Pope was in sympathy with St. Ursula, actually makes him embark with her at the start of the return journey. Incidentally these miniature paintings show that Memlinc knew Cologne well, for in all the scenes which take place in the city he has effectively introduced the Cathedral and other of its principal buildings.

The spirituality of Memlinc's portraiture, his power to paint the soul as well as the surface, is beautifully exemplified in "The Duke of Cleves," reproduced from the picture at the National Gallery. His romanticism, a new note which Memlinc definitely

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS," BY MABUSE (*circa* 1472–1535)

National Gallery, London.

In this remarkable picture we see one of the last masterpieces of pure Flemish art before it became influenced and changed by Italian painting. The words "Roi Jaspar," inscribed on the lid of the chalice offered to the Virgin, reveals the identity of the kneeling king. Behind him stands Melchior with his gift, a monstrance, in his right hand, while on our left is the swarthy figure of Balthasar holding before him a gold reliquary. In the original at the National Gallery the signature of the artist "IENNINE GOS . . ." may be deciphered on the torque of the turbaned attendant and also on Balthasar's turban.

Photo: Alinari.

"THE BANKER AND HIS WIFE," BY QUINTIN MASSYS (1466–1530)

The Louvre, Paris.

This delightfully intimate portrait of a fifteenth-century Banker and his Wife is deservedly the most popular of Massys' paintings. It is full of charming human touches, and there is no hint of the miser in the expression of the man who is counting and weighing his money. He is just getting on with a necessary piece of business, and both he and his wife, who has turned from her illuminated book —to see if he will be much longer—seem to tell us they will be glad when the day's work is over and nothing is to be done except enjoy their own domestic happiness.

Note how the reflection in the little mirror on the table shows us that these people are facing a window, through which comes the light which illumines them and all the details of the office.

contributes to painting, is bewitchingly exhaled from his "Betrothal of St. Catherine" and the "Legend of St. Ursula," both of which are touching in their simplicity, their girlish freshness, and miniature daintiness.

Already the city, so wealthy in the days of the Van Eycks, had become in the time of Memlinc *Bruges-la-Morte*. Something of its sad poetic solitude pervades his pictures. The great house of the Medici had collapsed, the rich merchants had gone elsewhere, and the next great Flemish painter, Quentin Massys (1466–1530), was domiciled in Antwerp.

§ 4

The Smith of Antwerp

Tradition relates that Quentin Massys, the "smith of Antwerp," became a painter only because his sweetheart would not marry a smith. The swinging brushwork and broad handling which he substituted for the small detailed touches of the earlier painters, well accord with the vigour demanded by the work of a smithy. His handling of colour is also new, for instead of placing unbroken blues, reds, yellows, etc., in immediate juxtaposition, he marshals his hues into a uniform colour-scheme. Disliking smallness in all things, he painted figures almost life-like; and when the size of his picture forbade the full-length he contented himself with half figures rather than reduce his scale to miniature proportions. "The Banker and his Wife" at the Louvre is a fine example of this innovation (facing page 33).

With the death of Quentin Massys in 1530 the first period of Flemish painting comes to an end. The next generation of Flemings either practised their art in Italy or, like Jan Gossart, called Mabuse (*c.* 1472–1535), imported Italian fashions in painting.

Mabuse, who took his name from the town of Maubeuge, where he was born about 1472, was a Fleming before he natural-

ised his art. This we may see by studying the magnificent example of his first manner at the National Gallery. "The Adoration of the Magi," bought for the nation from the Countess of Carlisle in 1911, was painted by Mabuse before he visited Italy. In the architectural background we get a hint of the influence of Roger van der Weyden; the thirty figures in their rather pompous costumes are stolid and almost stony in comparison with the grace of his later works.

Some ten years later Mabuse visited Italy in the train of the Duke of Burgundy, and in Florence Mabuse came under the influence of Leonardo da Vinci. That his first contact with the new naturalism did not have altogether happy results, we know by the commonplace realism of his "Adam and Eve" at Hampton Court. Soon, however, the warm air of Italy won him to gentleness, and in his Italianised works it is as a portrait-painter that Mabuse excels. Of his many portraits in Great Britain, the most beautiful is our colour plate, the portrait of "Margaret Tudor" (the elder sister of Henry VIII), which now hangs in the Scottish National Gallery at Edinburgh.

hoto: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"JAN ARNOLFINI AND HIS WIFE," BY JAN VAN EYCK

National Gallery, London.

This well-known picture, a favourite with all visitors to the National Gallery, is a splendid example both of Jan van Eyck's uthful and unflattering portraiture and also of his delight in rendering with scrupulous fidelity all the details of an interior. The flection in the round mirror is itself a miniature within a picture.

Photo: Anderson.

"THE ADORATION OF JESUS," BY HUGO VAN DER GOES (*circa* 1435–1482)

Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

The obvious inconsistencies in this strangely original work should not blind us to its many fine qualities. The adoring kings and angels are absurdly out of proportion, but the shepherds (on the right) are absolutely natural and true to life. All are good, but best of all is the one, clearly the last arrival, who is breathlessly peering over the heads of the kneeling two at the marvel before them. Admirable, again, is the figure of St. Joseph, on the left; no courtly figure is he, but a sturdy, toil-worn peasant. The true naturalism of the artist is also seen in the accurate painting of the architecture, the animals, and the still-life in the foreground.

THE REVIVAL OF SCULPTURE

Sculpture, which among the Greeks of the fifth century B. C. had reached a point of physical perfection never since surpassed, decayed with its sister art of painting after the fall of Rome. Statues became as stiff and mannered as the figures in Byzantine paintings. The first Gothic revival of the art took place in France. Nothing was accomplished in Italy from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries equal to the contemporary statuary which adorns the cathedrals of Chartres, Bourges, Amiens, and Rheims. The revival in Italy began with Niccolo of Pisa (1205-78). At this time Pisa was a town politically important and prosperous in commerce. Its wealth attracted vendors of Greek and Roman antiques. Niccolo studied these classical marbles, and eventually abandoned his practice as an architect to devote himself wholly to sculpture. He broke away from Byzantinism, founded a new school, and proved to his fellow-craftsmen the advantage of study from nature and the antique. He was followed by his son Giovanni and his pupil, Andrea Pisano, and Orcagna felt his influence; but with them ends the short story of Pisan art.

One Life—Two Gates

No better example of the patience and thoroughness of the mediæval artist could be found than Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455), one of the greatest workers in bronze of his century. Ghiberti was painting frescoes at Rimini when he heard that the

Merchant Guild of Florence was inviting Italian artists to compete for the making of the bronze doors for the Baptistery. He returned to Florence, and in the competition the exhibits of Ghiberti and Brunelleschi were pronounced equally good. The original bronze panels by both artists, illustrating "The Sacrifice of Abraham," are now in the National Museum, Florence. Brunelleschi withdrew, and in 1403 Ghiberti received the commission. These two gates became his life-work: he began them when he was 25, and he was 74 when they were finished. The first gate, representing scenes from the New Testament, was set up in 1424; the second, still more wonderful, took longer. While Ghiberti was working at the first gate, Brunelleschi reduced the laws of perspective to a science; and into the subjects from the Old Testament for the second gate Ghiberti introduced his newly acquired knowledge of perspective. Some panels contain as many as 100 figures, which, said the artist, "I modelled upon different planes, so that those nearest the eye might appear larger, and those more remote, smaller in proportion." The second gate was set up in 1452, and three years later Ghiberti died. After his death Michael Angelo—never easy to please—viewed his works and pronounced them "fit to be the gates of Paradise."

Donatello

A young companion of the architect Brunelleschi, who studied the antique with him at Rome and then returned to Florence, was Donatello (1386-1466). His is one of the greatest names in the history of sculpture. He brought to great perfection the art of carving in low relief, and his many busts and statues have a vigour, humanity, and dramatic power which he was the first to introduce into sculpture. His relief, "The Charge to St. Peter," in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, is almost an anticipation of the impressionism of Rodin in its suggestion of atmosphere and distance. Of his

Photo: Anderson.

STATUE OF GENERAL GATTAMELATA AT PADUA, BY DONATELLO (1386–1466)

One of the two finest equestrian statues in the world by the founder of Realism in Sculpture.

early period, when he was dominated by classic ideals, the bronze "David" at the Bargello, Florence, is considered the finest example. The first nude statue since Roman times thought out independently of its architectural surroundings, it is beautiful, both in its proportions and in its simple realism. The supreme masterpiece of his later years is the famous statue at Padua of the Condottiere Gattamelata on horseback. Majestic in its repose, yet pulsating with life, this work (see opposite page 36) is one of the two great equestrian statues of the world, the other being the Colleoni Monument at Venice, begun about forty years later by Donatello's pupil Verrocchio, and completed by the Venetian sculptor Alessandro Leopardi.

III

THE WONDER OF THE RENAISSANCE

THE WONDER OF THE RENAISSANCE

THE ART OF LEONARDO DA VINCI, MICHAEL ANGELO, AND RAPHAEL

§ 1

"OCCASIONALLY," says the Italian historian Vasari, "Heaven bestows upon a single individual beauty, grace, and ability, so that, whatever he does, every action is so divine that he distances all other men, and clearly displays how his genius is the gift of God and not an acquirement of human art. Men saw this in Leonardo da Vinci, whose personal beauty and grace cannot be exaggerated, whose abilities were so extraordinary that he could readily solve every difficulty that presented itself."

The Genius of da Vinci

His charming conversation won all hearts, we are told; with his right hand he could twist a horse-shoe as if it were made of lead, yet to the strength of a giant and the courage of a lion he added the gentleness of a dove. He was a lover of all animals, "whom he tamed with kindness and patience"; and like other great spirits whose souls are filled with poetry, he could not endure to see a caged bird. Often as he passed the place where birds were sold in Florence, Leonardo would stop, buy the birds, and restore them to liberty.

A painter and sculptor, the perfection of whose work out-

stripped that of all his predecessors, a scientist and inventor whose theories and discoveries were centuries ahead of his time, a practical engineer who could construct with equal ease and success an instrument of war or a monument of peace, an accomplished musician and composer, a deviser of masques and ballets, an experimental chemist, a skilful dissector, and author of the first standard book on Anatomy—is it surprising that this man should have been the wonder of his own and of all succeeding ages?

Genius is wayward, and as a boy Leonardo—who was born in 1452—was a source of anxiety to his father, Ser Piero da Vinci, a man of good family who, like his father and grandfather, was a notary of Florence. At school, his masters said, he was capricious and fickle: "he began to learn many things and then gave them up"; but it was observed that however many other things took his fancy from time to time, the boy never neglected drawing and modelling. His father took these drawings to his friend the artist, Andrea del Verrocchio, who, amazed at the talent they displayed, gladly consented to have Leonardo as his pupil.

One day his master received a commission from the friars of Vallombroso to paint a picture of "St. John Baptizing Christ," and having much work on hand Verrocchio asked Leonardo to help him finish the picture by painting one of the angels. When Leonardo had done this his angel surpassed all the other figures in beauty, so that his master was filled with admiration, yet also with despair that a mere boy should know more and paint better than he could himself. Chagrined, the older artist admitted his defeat; he is said never to have touched a brush again, but to have devoted the rest of his life to sculpture.

From that moment the reputation of Leonardo was made, and the nobles and princes of Italy sought his services. In 1493 he was invited to Milan by the Duke Ludovico Sforza, who was captivated alike by the genius of the artist and the charm of his

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. SEBASTIAN," BY ANTONIO AND PIERO POLLAIUOLO (1432–1498 and 1443–1496)
National Gallery, London.

Antonio Pollaiuolo was a pioneer of naturalism. For four centuries the figures of the stooping cross-bowmen in the foreground of this picture have aroused admiration by their extraordinary realism and sense of tension. "We can almost hear them holding their breath for the effort": this was written about it 300 years ago, and we feel the same to-day.

Note also how the grouping of the figures forms a pyramid of which the Saint is the apex, and how the lines of the arrows contribute to the symmetry of the composition. The landscape background, showing the valley of the Arno, with Florence on the left, is the work of Piero.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"PORTRAIT OF AN OLD MAN AND HIS GRANDCHILD," BY D. GHIRLANDAIO (1449–1494)

The Louvre, Paris.

One of the world's great masterpieces, this picture teaches us that true beauty resides in expression more than in regularity of features. The homely countenance of this good old man, despite his deformed nose, is transfigured by his expression of benevolence and affection; in his own way he becomes as beautiful as the child gazing at him with love and perfect trust. Profoundly moving in its expression, this painting is equally masterly in its technique. Note the perfect balance in the placing of the heads and the way in which the child's hand provides the patch of light needed in one corner to set off properly the view through a window which occupies the other.

personality. While at Milan Leonardo painted his famous "Last Supper" (facing page 44) for the Dominicans of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, choosing the moment when the Apostles are anxious to discover who would betray their Master.

Despite his marvellous facility, Leonardo was not a quick worker, and his procrastination in finishing this picture alarmed the Prior, who besought the Duke to reprimand the artist for "mooning about" instead of getting on with the work. When the Duke spoke to Leonardo the latter gently explained how necessary it was for artists to think things out before they began to paint. "Two heads remain to be done," he said. "I feel unable to conceive the beauty of the celestial grace that must have been incarnate in Our Lord. The other head which causes me thought is that of Judas. I do not think I can express the face of a man who could resolve to betray his Master, after having received so many benefits.

"But to save time," added Leonardo, "I will in this case seek no further, but for want of a better idea I will put in the head of the Prior."

The Duke laughed heartily and told the Prior to let Leonardo finish the work in peace.

The "Mona Lisa"

More famous even than his "Last Supper," and happily in a far better state of preservation to-day, is Leonardo's portrait of "Mona Lisa," third wife of Francesco del Gioconda, a Florentine official. For centuries this portrait with the lustrous eyes and mysterious smile has been regarded as the supreme expression in art of the eternal enigma of womanhood. By a freak of fate the man who commissioned this portrait never had it, for it was still in the possession of the artist—by whom it was considered unfinished—when Leonardo left Italy for France on the invitation of King Francis. The King of France had met Leonardo at Milan, and had long wished to tempt him to his own Court.

After innumerable disappointments in Italy, Leonardo in his old age sought refuge from Italian envy and ingratitude with the French King. Francis received him with every kindness and honour, and when the old man fell sick he frequently visited him.

One day the aged artist was seized with a paroxysm, and the kindly monarch, endeavouring to alleviate the pain, took his head into his arms. "Leonardo's divine spirit, then recognising that he could not enjoy a greater honour, expired in the king's arms." So Leonardo died, as Vasari relates, in 1519; and thus it came about that his world-famous portrait of "Mona Lisa" (of which we give a colour-plate) is now in France's national museum, the Louvre.

§ 2

The Brothers Pollaiuolo

There is no one person in whom the spirit of the Renaissance—that is to say, the rebirth of ancient art and learning—is so completely summed up and expressed as in Leonardo da Vinci. Yet "The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian," by the brothers Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo (facing page 42), again shows something quite modern in its feeling and expression. These two Florentines were contemporaries of Leonardo. Antonio (1432-98) was of humble origin. His father, who, as his surname shows, was a poulterer, apprenticed the boy to a goldsmith, with whom he soon made a reputation as the most skilful workman in the shop. In time he was able to open a shop of his own, and his reliefs and wax models were much admired by sculptors as well as by his patrons. Meanwhile his younger brother Piero, eleven years his junior, had been apprenticed to a painter, and in early middle age Antonio thought he would like to become a painter also. He had educated himself, learning all he could of anatomy and perspective; and found no difficulty in the drawing, but the colouring was so different from anything he had done before that

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE LAST SUPPER," BY LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452–1519)

Sta. Maria delle Grazie, Milan.

"Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray Me." This is the moment the artist has dramatically re-created. Judas (third on the Saviour's right) is guiltily withdrawing the hand extended to the dish, while behind his isolated figure Peter passionately consults the beloved disciple John. On the other side, beyond beckoning Thomas and the amazed James the Great, is the beautiful figure of Philip, whose gesture eloquently speaks to us, "Lord, Thou knowest I am not he!"

Leonardo's masterpiece has so stamped itself on the imagination of the world, that we can no longer visualise the scene in any other fashion.

"VIRGIN ADORIN THE INFANT CHRIST" (ALBANI ALTAR-PIECE), BY PERUGINO (1446–1523)

This central panel of the famous altar-piece in the Villa Albani, Rome, is the most exquisite of all Perugino's numerous paintings. It exhibits in equal perfection the sweet gracefulness of his feminine types and the aerial perspective which gives a sense of infinite distance to his tender landscape backgrounds.

at first he despaired of success; but firm in his resolve he put himself under his younger brother, and in a few months became an excellent painter.

Of all works painted by the two brothers the most famous is "The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian," now in the National Gallery.

The manysidedness, so characteristic of the artists of the Renaissance, which we have already found in Leonardo and Antonio Pollaiuolo, also distinguishes one of the most interesting of their contemporaries. Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-94), who also was originally a goldsmith, owes his very name to a freak of fashion. He was the first to invent and make fashionable the head ornament worn by Florentine girls. Hence he became known as Ghirlandaio (the maker of garlands), not only because he was the original inventor but also, we hear, because his were of such exceeding beauty that every girl wanted a garland from his shop.

The Energy of Ghirlandaio

Discontented with his trade, which gave comparatively small scope to his genius for design, Domenico began painting portraits of the people who came to his shop. These were so lifelike and so beautifully painted, that the fame of the artist soon spread, and he was inundated with orders for portraits, altar-pieces, and decorations for the palaces of noblemen. Pope Sixtus IV heard about him and sent to Florence, inviting him to come to Rome and join the band of famous artists who were already at work on what is now known as the Sistine Chapel.

His great work, "The Call of SS. Peter and Andrew," in the Sistine Chapel is a splendid example of the boldness of composition which he contributed to art; but his small painting at the Louvre, "Portrait of an Old Man and his Grandchild," has a far wider celebrity. We present it (facing page 43) not only as a specimen of Ghirlandaio's decorative arrangement and inti-

mate feeling, but as an outstanding masterpiece of Christian art, Christian because the painter has here sought and found that beauty of *character* which was utterly beyond the range of the pagan artists who found beauty in *proportions.*

When we remember that Ghirlandaio began painting late, and was carried off by a fever at the comparatively early age of forty-four, we are astounded at the quantity and quality of the work he left behind. He was a man of immense energy and hated to be interrupted in his work. Once when his brother David bothered him on some domestic matter, he replied: "Leave me to work while you make provision, because now that I have begun to master my art I feel sorry that I am not employed to paint the entire circuit of the walls of Florence."

§ 3

Michael Angelo

Nine people out of ten, if asked to name the greatest artist who ever lived, would reply Michael Angelo Buonarotti, who was born in 1475 at Castel Caprese a small town near Florence, of which his father was chief magistrate. The babe was put out to nurse with the wife of a marble-worker, and in later days the great sculptor jokingly attributed his vocation to his foster-mother's milk. His father had other ideas for him, and used a stick freely to impress on the lad the advantages of a commercial career, but Michael Angelo was obstinate and intractable. At last the father gave way, and when the son was thirteen he apprenticed him to Ghirlandaio for three years. Long before his apprenticeship was out, the boy had shown a preference for sculpture. His talent in modelling was brought to the notice of Lorenzo de' Medici, who nominated him for the famous "Garden School" of sculpture which he had founded under the direction of Donatello's chief assistant, Bartoldo. The ruler of Florence, pleased with the progress of his protégé, took him into his house-

Photo: Alinari.

"PORTRAIT OF BALTHASAR CASTIGLIONE," BY RAPHAEL (1483–1520)

The Louvre, Paris.

This superbly handsome and life-like portrait is Raphael's masterpiece in portraiture.

Count Baldassare Castiglione was the intimate and lifelong friend of Raphael. He was himself a scholar and author of some repute: his book, *The Courtier*, gives a wonderful picture of the palace life at Urbino between 1504 and 1508.

"THE MADONNA OF SAN SISTO," BY RAPHAEL

Dresden.

The Sistine Madonna is justly the most famous and most favoured of all Raphael's Madonnas; for, though others may rival it in formal beauty, in no other does he reach the same height of spiritual expression. The Christ-child, so solemnly yet naturally gazing at the infinite, the slender, majestic, yet entirely human mother, are figures which, once we have seen them, haunt our memory for ever.

hold and made him an allowance of 500 ducats a month. This lasted till 1492, when Lorenzo died, and the youth had to make his own way in the world. Meanwhile a new influence came into his life.

In 1490, when Michael Angelo was a boy of fifteen, Savonarola had begun to preach his impassioned sermons in Florence. The whole city trembled at the terrible voice, which hurled thunderbolts at the Pope himself. All Florence was like a revival meeting; people rushed about the street weeping and shouting, wealthy citizens became monks, high officials abdicated their positions.

A Dream which came True

Michael Angelo for the first time in his life was afraid, afraid of the unknown horrors predicted for Florence. He was miserable under the degenerate Piero de' Medici, a stupid tyrant who wasted his time and his talent by commanding him to model a statue in snow! One night a poet friend of the sculptor dreamt that the dead Lorenzo appeared to him and bade him warn Piero that soon he would be driven from his house, never to return. He told the Prince, who laughed and had him well cudgelled; he told Michael Angelo, who believed and fled to Venice.

That was in October, 1494. A month later Piero fled in his turn, and Florence, with the support of Savonarola, was declared a republic owning no king but Jesus Christ.

Michael Angelo soon got over his superstitious terrors. That winter he spent at Bologna in learned circles, and forgetting Savonarola, he read Dante and Petrarch; he was absorbed by the beauty of nature and the dignity of the antique world. At the very time when his contemporaries at Florence were fanatically indulging in a religious revival, Michael Angelo seemed to assert his paganism by carving a "Sleeping Cupid" so full of Greek feeling that it was sold in Rome to the Cardinal San Giorgio as an antique by a Greek sculptor. When he discovered

he had been cheated, the deceived collector was so delighted to think a living Italian could rival the dead Greeks that he sent for the young sculptor and took him under his protection. In 1496, while the Florentines were heaping pagan pictures, ornaments, and books on Savonarola's "Bonfire of Vanities," when his own brother, the monk Leonardo, was being prosecuted for his faith in the Friar, Michael Angelo in Rome seemed anxious to prove himself a pagan of pagans, producing a "Bacchus," an "Adonis," and the lovely "Cupid" (facing page 51) which is now at South Kensington.

On May 23, 1498, the fickle populace of Florence turned against its idol. Savonarola was burnt to death at the stake. Still Michael Angelo appeared to take no notice. No mention of Savonarola or his martyrdom can be found in any of the sculptor's letters.

But in his own art he made his own comment. From 1498 to 1501 he worked feverishly, perhaps remorsefully, on a marble group the like of which had never before been seen: a Virgin whose haunting face is impressed with a "sorrow more beautiful than beauty's self," across whose knees is lying a Christ of such serene physical beauty and perfection that we say "He is not dead but sleepeth."

The Greatest Sculptor in the World

This was Michael Angelo's confession to his Maker, the supreme "Pieta" at St. Peter's, Rome: a work of which the exquisite beauty is only equalled by its ineffable sadness. Botticelli, too, was more moved by the end of Savonarola than ever he had been by his preaching. But Botticelli was then an old man: Michael Angelo had but just turned twenty-three and was only on the threshold of his career. Already his pagan days were over. Melancholy claimed him for her own, and never after let him go. In five years he had established his reputation as the greatest sculptor in the world, but then, as now, glory is not

"MONA LISA" OR "LA JOCONDE", BY LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452–1519)

In the Louvre, Paris

necessarily remunerative. His family believed he was making a fortune; and too proud to acknowledge his true poverty-stricken condition, he starved himself to give alms to his kindred. His own father pestered and abused him worst of all; his whole family bled him white, and then denounced him as being mean.

In 1501 he returned to Florence to make the famous statue of "David," which was to commemorate the deliverance of the city from her enemies. But no happiness awaited him in his native town. He was foolishly pitted against Leonardo da Vinci, and envy and jealousy excited by tittle-tattlers. The two great men of the time, who ought to have been understanding friends and comrades, were forced into enmity. Michael Angelo grew morose and suspicious. One day as he was walking through the streets of Florence he saw Leonardo discussing a passage in Dante with a group of citizens. Meaning nothing but kindness, Leonardo hailed his rival and said to his friends, "Michael Angelo here will explain the verses of which you speak."

But the embittered sculptor scented an insult in the innocent remark and passionately retorted: "Explain them yourself, you who made the model of a bronze horse and who, incapable of casting it, left it unfinished—to your shame, be it said!"

This allusion to his equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, never finished, wounded Leonardo to the quick. Conscious of his fatal tendency to procrastinate, he reddened as Michael Angelo turned his back on him and strode away.

Unhappy in Florence, Michael Angelo was not sorry when in 1505 Pope Julius II called him back to Rome. Later he was to regret still more bitterly that he ever went. Julius desired a colossal mausoleum to be built for his remains, and the sculptor entered into the project with enthusiasm. He spent eight months in the Carrara quarries selecting his marbles, and in December returned to Rome, where the blocks began to arrive. But a rival artist, Bramante, hinted to the Pope that it was unlucky to build your tomb in your own lifetime. The Pope

hastily dropped the idea of the mausoleum, closed his door to Michael Angelo, who was left not only unpaid for his work and time, but in debt for the marbles he had obtained. The sculptor was driven out of the Vatican by a groom, and quivering with indignation the humiliated genius at once left Rome for Florence.

But no sooner was he in Florence than the Pope wanted him back at Rome. Eventually he got him back, and perhaps the eccentric, inconstant Pope meant kindly; but he reduced Michael Angelo to despair by demanding that the greatest sculptor in the world should spend his time painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Again the architect Bramante was the evil genius; he had prompted the command believing the sculptor would fail ignominiously. What was meant for his dishonour became his greatest glory.

Michael Angelo never wanted to do the work. Already his young rival Raphael had commenced painting the "Stanze" of the Vatican with unparalleled success. The sculptor pleaded that this ceiling should be given to Raphael, but the Pope insisted and his will was law. On March 10, 1508, the distracted artist wrote: "To-day I, Michael Angelo, sculptor, began the painting of the chapel." The next year, on January 27, 1509, he wrote again: "This is not my profession. . . . I am uselessly wasting my time." To-day the whole world thinks otherwise.

The Wonder of the Sistine Chapel

Of all the palaces of art which Europe contains, there is not one more wonderful within, or with a meaner exterior, than the Sistine Chapel. The long barn-like structure, lit by twelve roundheaded windows, was built over what was once the Library by Sixtus IV. His aim was to ornament the chapel with scenes from the world's history pointing to the coming of Christ. All the greatest artists of the preceding generation, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Piero di Cosimo, and Perugino, had been called

Photo: Anderson.

"DELPHIC SIBYL," BY MICHAEL ANGELO (1475–1564)

Sistine Chapel, Rome.

The description of Michael Angelo as "a sculptor who painted" is aptly illustrated by this noble picture. The introduction of a pagan priestess into a Christian church may seem surprising, but at the time of the Renaissance ecclesiastics revered these Sibyls because one of them had prophesied: "A Child shall be born whose advent will bring peace to the world."

This was believed to be an inspired foretelling of the coming of Christ. Accordingly the Delphic Sibyl and her sisters could properly be included among these paintings, all of which point to the preparation of the world, from its earliest moments, for the revelation of Christianity.

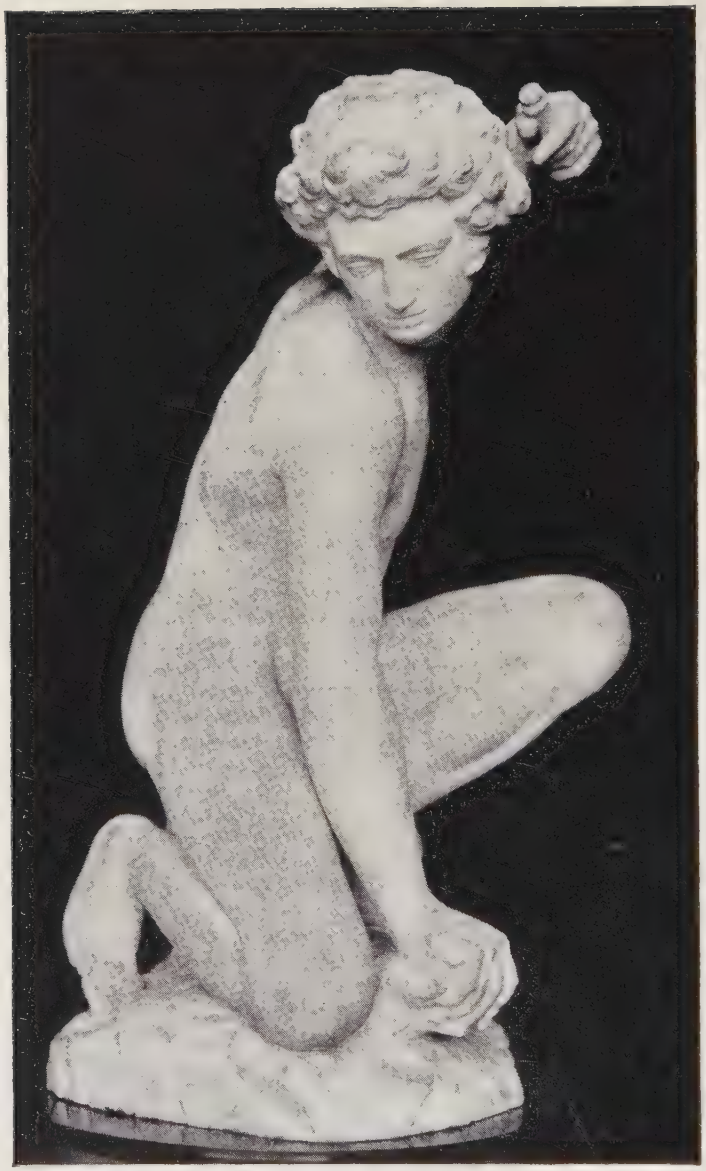


Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"CUPID," BY MICHAEL ANGELO

This exquisite marble statue, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, is an early work of the artist. It was executed in Rome when Michael Angelo was a young man of twenty-two, and reveals a perfection of form which hitherto his contemporaries had thought could only be realised in an antique.

upon to assist in the work, and after the death of Sixtus the completion of the Chapel occupied his nephew Count Giuliano Rovere, who succeeded him as Julius II.

Most artists who had received a papal commission of this magnitude began their work with an army of assistants. Bramante, with a show of giving his enemy every assistance, brought some experienced fresco-painters from Florence and erected a scaffolding whereby they might get at the ceiling. Furious and suspicious of everything and everybody, Michael Angelo began by declaring Bramante's scaffolding to be useless and by raising another. Next he got rid of his assistants. One morning he got there early, destroyed everything they had done, locked himself in, and refused to admit the Florentines.

During the next four years, working feverishly and in secret, the sculptor accomplished the mightiest series of paintings in the world. He had endless troubles and difficulties. The work was new to him, and he had to learn its technique as he went along. Hardly had he finished painting one panel, "The Deluge," when the surface became mouldy and he had to do it all over again. All this time his relatives badgered him for money; the Pope, irritated at his secrecy and seeming slowness, threatened to have him thrown from the top of his scaffolding, and at last worn out, but still not content with his creations, Michael Angelo, after lying for four years on his back to paint this ceiling, once more stood erect and allowed the scaffolding to be taken down on All Saints' Day, 1512.

His worst enemies were amazed at the greatness and magnitude of his achievement. Raphael, great enough himself to fear no rival, was the first to praise it, thanking God aloud that he had been born in the same century. No photographs can do justice to what Raphael and his contemporaries then saw. In default of the original, we can but show a single figure (facing page 50), and let the imagination do the rest.

Michael Angelo divided the great oblong space of the ceil-

ing into nine principal sections, or rather three groups of three scenes each. The first group illustrating "The Creation of the World," consisted of (1) "God Dividing Light from Darkness," (2) "God Creating the Luminaries," and (3) "God Blessing the Earth." The second group, illustrating "The Fall of Man," showed (4) "The Creation of Adam," (5) "The Creation of Eve," and (6) "The Temptation and Fall." The last three, illustrating the uselessness of sacrifice under the old dispensation, represented (7) "The Sacrifice of Noah," (8) "The Deluge," and (9) "The Drunkenness of Noah." These nine panels were knit together by a connecting framework in which were placed single figures of Prophets, Sibyls, and other decorative figures, lunettes and triangles, so that the whole appeared as an elaborate architectural roof ornamented with reliefs and sculptured figures among which nine great pictures had been inserted.

The work was completed, but Michael Angelo at thirty-seven was an old man. His health was shattered. Working for months on end with his head thrown back had strained his neck and brought on painful swellings of the glands; his sight was injured to such an extent that for long afterwards he could not read a book or letter unless he held it above his head. Then, when the old Pope, satisfied at last, might have rewarded the heroic artist, Julius died and was succeeded by Leo X, who had work for Raphael, but none for Michael Angelo.

The harassed sculptor went back to Florence, where he set to work on another masterpiece of sculpture, the "Tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici," with its beautiful recumbent figures of "Night," and "Morning," "Dawn" and "Twilight." Worse troubles were in store for him. Disgusted with all things, including himself, he threw himself into the revolution which convulsed Florence in 1627. Though no engineer like Leonardo, the republican revolutionaries put him in charge of the fortifications of the city. Distrustful of everybody, Michael Angelo feared that Malatesta Baglione, the general of the Florentine troops, might betray the

"THE ANSIDEI MADONNA," BY RAPHAEL

National Gallery, London.

This famous altar-piece, originally painted for the Ansidei family of Perugia, shows the Virgin and Child in the centre, with St. John the Baptist on one side and St. Nicolas of Bari on the other. In the eighteenth century the picture was purchased from the Church of S. Fiorenzo—where it had hung since 1506—by Lord Robert Spencer, who presented it to the third Duke of Marlborough. It was bought from the Marlborough collection at Blenheim for the National Gallery in 1885, at a cost of £70,000.

Photo: Anderson.

"THE TRANSFIGURATION," BY RAPHAEL

This picture at the Vatican, Raphael's last masterpiece, shows the transfiguration of Christ, floating over the Mount in clear air, between Moses and Elijah. Prostrate on the earth are Peter, James, and John, in varied attitudes. In the foreground an excited group gathers round the boy possessed of devils.

At the lying-in-state of Raphael, which followed the great artist's death, this picture—which he had painted for the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici—was placed at the head of the corpse in the Hall wherein Raphael had last worked.

city to the troops of the new Pope (Clement VII); his warning unheeded by the authorities, he feared the hostility of the powerful commander, and giving way to an attack of nerves he fled to Venice for his life. There he was safe and might have gone to France, but an appeal to his honour brought him back to Florence. Once more he took his place in the fighting line, and six months later Malatesta Baglione, as he foresaw, betrayed the city to the Emperor.

Irony of fate! The life of the wretched sculptor was spared in order that he might work again for the glory of those tyrants, the Medici, against whom he had fought. In 1534, another Pope, Paul III, called him to Rome to enter on a new project. Again the sculptor was asked to paint, to cover the immense wall at the entrance to the Sistine Chapel with a fresco representing "The Last Judgment." He began the work when he was sixty-one, and again shutting himself up, accomplished the task in a little over five years. It was no work for an old man of nearly seventy, and the following year the sculptor had to turn from painting to architecture; by command of the Pope he designed the mighty Dome which to all the world to-day is the sign and symbol of the Eternal City.

Michael Angelo's Last Years

Vasari, who visited the old man when he was eighty-eight, gives a wonderful picture of Michael Angelo's last years. He lived like a poor man, ate hardly anything but a little bread and drank but a little wine. Unable to sleep, he would get up at night to work with his chisel, and made himself a paper helmet in which a candle was fixed, so that he might have light to work without embarrassing his hands.

On February 12, 1564, the old man spent the whole day on his feet working at a "Pieta." Two days afterwards he was seized with fever, but with his usual obstinacy refused to see a doctor or to go to bed. On the 17th he consented to be put to bed,

and, fully conscious, dictated his will, bequeathing "his soul to God and his body to the earth." About five o'clock on the following afternoon, surrounded by his faithful servant and a few friends, the worn-out genius breathed his last and found that rest which had never been granted him in life.

§ 4

The "Divine" Raphael

Happy the painter who has no history! Life, so cruel to Michael Angelo, had nothing but kindness for his young contemporary, Raphael Sanzio. Born at Urbino in 1483, his way was smoothed for him from the moment (1504) that he left the workshop of his master Perugino to begin an independent career. Beautiful as an angel in person, sweet in disposition, charming in manner and conversation, Raphael was a favourite everywhere. After perfecting his art by study in Florence, he was invited to Rome in 1508 to undertake the decoration of the Stanze in the Vatican. These paintings at once established his reputation, and in 1511 he was appointed Chief Architect of St. Peter's, Surveyor and Guardian of the Ancient Monuments of Rome, and overwhelmed with commissions for mighty projects of painting which his gentle courtesy had not the determination to refuse.

He walked through Rome in those years of his glory, amid a throng of assistants and admirers. Thus meeting him once, grim old Michael Angelo growled out, "You look like a General at the head of an army."

Laughing and quite unspoilt, Raphael wittily retorted: "And you, sir, like an executioner on the way to the scaffold."

As a portrait-painter his "Balthasar Castiglione" at the Louvre (facing page 46), as a painter of altar-pieces his "Sistine Madonna" at Dresden (facing page 47) and the "Ansidei Madonna" in the National Gallery (facing page 52), have made Raphael familiar to all and loved by all. In 1520 he was working

Photo: Anderson.

"POPE JULIUS II," BY RAPHAEL

Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Giuliano da Rovere, afterwards Pope Julius II, was a nephew of Cardinal Francesco di Savona, who became Sixtus IV and began the erection of the world-famed chapel in the Vatican which bears his name. By his enlightened patronage of contemporary art, Julius II has secured an undying fame, which eclipses any reputation he once enjoyed for theological wisdom or political sagacity.

on his great "Transfiguration" in the Vatican, when a fever struck him down. On March 27 he laid down the brush that he was never to hold again, and on Good Friday, April 6, his birthday, he died as the sun went down, amid the tears of those who mourned not only the artist but the man. He had lived only thirty-seven years, but from that day to this not for one moment has the lustre of his name been dimmed.

IV

THE ROAD TO VENICE

THE ROAD TO VENICE

THE ART OF MANTEGNA, FRANCIA, CORREGGIO, BELLINI, AND GIORGIONE

§ 1

IT takes nine tailors to make a man. So runs the familiar saying, but one tailor of Padua in the fifteenth century sufficed to found a school of painting which has won immortal fame. In all the history of art no stranger figure exists than that of Francesco Squarcione, tailor and embroiderer of Padua. He had little to do with painting or painters till he was past forty, and yet this man was the master of 137 pupils and the "Father" of the glorious schools of Venice, Parma, Bologna, Lombardy, and Ferrara.

Here let us pause to explain that while the succession of painters known as the Florentine School were perfecting their art, as related in the last chapter, groups of artists had already begun to collect in other Italian cities. So far back as 1375, twelve years before the birth of Fra Angelico, a Florentine painter named Justus had settled in Padua; and when Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1452, Padua was already famous as an art centre.

The Strange Story of a Tailor

But to return to our tailor. To the University of Padua came, at one time or another, all the learned men of Italy.

Nothing was heard in the streets but talk of ancient lore and the beauty of ancient art. The astute tailor soon found that a fragment of sculpture or a stone with a Greek inscription brought him more and better customers than the display of the latest fashions. Gradually the tailoring and embroidering became a side-line in his complicated business, and the shop of Squarcione gained much fame as a storehouse of antique treasures of art. Artists came to him asking to be allowed to draw his fine old statues.

Squarcione had a keen eye to the main chance, and the power to discover and use the talents of others. Whether he himself ever painted is doubtful, but in 1441, when he was a man of forty-seven, he managed to qualify himself for admission to the Guild of Painters at Padua. His business instinct would not allow him to let slip a ready-made opportunity. When students sought to study his unrivalled collection of antique models, they found themselves bound as apprentices to Squarcione; and henceforward—on the strength of *their* work—Squarcione blossomed into the proprietor of a flourishing art business.

The Boy Genius of Padua

In 1443 he was given the contract to decorate with paintings the Chapel of the Eremitani at Padua, and this contract he fulfilled for the most part by the hand of a boy of twelve, whom two years earlier Squarcionne had adopted as his son and pupil. This boy was a nameless orphan, who acquired undying fame as Andrea Mantegna. He was only ten years old when, as the "son of Squarcione," he was admitted a member of the Padua Guild of Painters, and from this fact alone we can guess his extraordinary precocity. At the age of twelve Mantegna was employed on important paintings for the Chapel of the Eremitani, and it was the reputation of the pupil, rather than that of the master, which brought students in shoals to Padua.

Another great piece of good luck which befell Squarcione

"PARNASSUS," BY MANTEGNA (1431–1506)

The Louvre, Paris.

The paganism of this picture illustrates the change that came over Italian art in the fifteenth century owing to that revival of interest in the achievements of Ancient Greece and Rome which is known as "The Renaissance."

Andrea Mantegna, who was devoted to Greek ideals, here pictures an imaginary scene on Mount Parnassus, the legendary home of the Nine Muses, personifications of the Fine Arts. On the mountain top stand Venus and Apollo, with Cupid trumpeting their praise, while around them the Muses dance. In the corner stands Mercury, the Messenger of the Gods, with Pegasus, the winged horse, waiting to bear inspiration from these divinities to the poets and artists of the earth. Note how the pyramidical design, helped by the horse's wing, gives dignity to the scene.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE CRUCIFIXION," BY ANTONELLO DA MESSINA (1430-79)

National Gallery, London.

This Sicilian artist, who went to Flanders for his training, was the first to introduce into Italy the Flemish method of painting in *oils*. We can see the influence of Flemish painting in his rather homely types, but the beautiful landscape with a city in the middle distance is entirely Italian.

was the arrival in Padua of the Venetian painter Jacopo Bellini (*c.* 1400–71), whom the wily contractor inveigled into his business, and there is little room for doubt that Bellini was for many years the actual teacher of painting in the school of the Paduan contractor. Mantegna got his drawing from observing the Greek statues among Squarcione's antiques, but he learnt colouring from Bellini, who was his true master. But so precocious was the genius of Mantegna that at seventeen he had already formed his style and brought his natural talents to mature perfection. At this age he painted an altar-piece for St. Sophia at Padua, a picture which, as the sixteenth-century critic Vasari wrote, "might well be the production of a skilled veteran and not of a mere boy."

Success begets success, and at an early age Mantegna was able to set up for himself. Squarcione became still more furious when Mantegna married the daughter of Jacopo Bellini, who had now broken away from the firm and become a rival. Henceforward the old contractor blamed Mantegna's works as much as he had previously praised them, "saying they were bad, because he had imitated marble, a thing impossible in painting, since stones always possess a certain harshness and never have that softness peculiar to flesh and natural objects."

It is true that Mantegna's sense of form was severe and his figures often remind us of marble statues, but the envious carping of his old master in no wise injured his reputation. His fame spread throughout Italy, and Pope Innocent VIII invited him to Rome, where he was employed on painting the walls of the Belvedere. The payments for this work were not so regular as the painter thought they should have been, and one day he ventured to drop a hint to the Pope, who had come to look at Mantegna's paintings of the Virtues.

"What's that figure?" asked the Pontiff.

"One much honoured here, your Holiness," said the artist pointedly; "it is Prudence."

"You should associate Patience with her," replied the Pope, who understood the allusion, and later when the work was completed we are told Mantegna was "richly rewarded."

After painting in various Italian cities, Mantegna returned to Mantua, where he built himself a handsome house, and there in 1506, he died at the age of seventy-five. The peculiar qualities of his art, his austere draughtsmanship and compact design, may be seen in many works in England, notably in "The Triumph of Julius Cæsar" at Hampton Court, and in his "Madonna and Child" and "Triumph of Scipio" in the National Gallery; but the most perfect example of Mantegna's art is his great picture "Parnassus," in the Louvre at Paris (facing page 60). Here, as the illustration shows, Mantegna is able to express all his love of Greek art in picturing the home of the Nine Muses, who dance in homage round Venus and Apollo, while Mercury, the Messenger of the Gods, awaits with Pegasus the winged horse to bear inspiration from this mythological heaven to the artists and poets of the earth.

§ 2

The Goldsmith of Bologna

To enumerate all the artists who were influenced by Mantegna and the School of Squarcione would be to give a list of a hundred names and to attempt a task beyond the scope of this Outline; but brief mention must be made of one whose life, and particularly whose death, is of unusual and romantic interest. Francesco Francia (1450–1517) was a goldsmith of Bologna who achieved great fame as an engraver of medallion portraits long before the example of Mantegna inspired him to become a painter also. Francia was one of the first artists to make prints from an engraved plate, and served literature by designing the famous italic type for the press of Aldus Manutius. As a painter, Francia began with portraits and proceeded

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE EDUCATION OF CUPID," BY CORREGGIO (1494–1534)

National Gallery, London.

"The soft beauty of his flesh tints and the grace of his finish," which won the admiration of this artist's contemporaries, still charms us to-day.

In this lovely allegory Correggio shows us Mercury—the patron deity in Greek mythology of schools and colleges—teaching Cupid to spell out love, while Venus, the incarnation of feminine charm, looks on approvingly.

Photo: Bruckmann.

"GANYMEDE," BY CORREGGIO

Pinakothek, Vienna.

Ganymede, according to an old Greek legend, was a beautiful Trojan boy who was carried off from Mt. Ida by an eagle to be Jupiter's cupbearer in place of Hebe, who had excited the jealousy of Juno.

Correggio's unrivalled power of depicting bodies floating in the air is as beautifully displayed in this painting as in his large decorations with multitudes of flying figures which constitute the glory of the Cathedral at Parma.

to altar-pieces, in which he displayed a remarkable psychological insight. Both in ancient times and in modern his lunette of the Dead Christ in the lap of the Virgin has been regarded as a most beautiful work, poignant in the intensity of its expression. As the illustration facing page 67 shows, this half-moon shaped picture is the upper part of a famous altar-piece originally painted for the Church of St. Frediano at Lucca, and now in the National Gallery, London. The main picture below shows the Madonna and Child, with the following saints (from left to right): St. Sebastian, St. Paul, St. Anne, St. Lawrence, and St. Benedict, while in front of the throne is the figure of the young St. John the Baptist; and the wan expressive face of the young Virgin seems to suggest that she is already forewarned of the tragedy commemorated by the picture above. Francia was at the height of his reputation in Bologna when the young Raphael was working in Rome. The two artists never met, for Raphael was too busy to leave the Vatican and Francia was too old to travel. But they heard much of each other, and Francia, as the elder, offered to help his junior in any way he could. He had never seen a picture by Raphael, and longed to view some work by the young man of whom everybody was talking. At last the opportunity came. Raphael was commissioned to paint a panel of "St. Cecilia" for a Bolognese chapel, St. Giovanni in Monte; and when he had finished the painting he sent it to Francia at Bologna with a courteous letter begging the older artist to "correct any errors found in it" and then set it up on the altar for which it was intended.

When Francia drew the masterpiece from its case and viewed it in a good light, he was filled with amazement and with chagrin, so Vasari says, at his presumption in offering to help so great a genius:

> Francia, half dead at the overwhelming power and beauty of the picture, which he had to compare with his own

works lying around, though thoroughly discouraged, took it to St. Giovanni in Monte, to the chapel where it was to be. Returning home he took to his bed in an agony, feeling that art could offer him no more, and died, some suppose of grief and melancholy, due to his contemplation of the living picture of Raphael.

That is the story told by Vasari, and though it may seem incredible to us that any artist should be so fatally affected by seeing the work of another, the fact that so strange a cause of death was related in good faith reveals to us how seriously art was taken in Italy in 1518.

§ 3

Correggio (1494-1534)

To appreciate all that Squarcione's school at Padua did for Italian art, we must trace its influence into the second and third generation. In addition to the sons of Bellini—to whom we shall return—who were the real founders of Venetian painting, the old contractor had among his pupils Cosimo Tura (1420-95), who founded the School of Ferrara. Tura had a pupil named Bianci who founded a school in Modena, and there had a pupil greater than any of his predecessors, Antonio Allegri, known as Correggio, from the place of his birth. Of the life of this great man singularly little is known, and apart from his art it does not seem to have been in any way eventful. Vasari tells us that Correggio "was of a very timid disposition and, at a great personal inconvenience, worked continually for the family which depended on him. In art he was very melancholy, enduring its labours, but he never allowed difficulties to deter him, as we see in the great tribune of the Duomo of Parma."

It is with Parma that the name of Correggio is always associated, for his greatest works were executed there between 1518 and 1530, and the Cathedral of Parma is the monument of his

Photo. R. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE DOGE LEONARDO LOREDANO," BY GIOVANNI BELLINI. (1501–1505)

(In the National Gallery.)

genius. In its marvellous complexity and rich invention, his "Assumption of the Virgin" there has no rival in the world. If his fluent and sure drawing was derived from Mantegna, his mastery of light and shade from Leonardo da Vinci, and his tremendous forms and designs borrowed from the storehouse of Michael Angelo, yet his marvellous colouring is entirely his own, and it is as a colourist, above all, that Correggio is supreme.

"It is considered certain," wrote Vasari, "that there never was a better colourist, nor any artist who imparted more loveliness or relief to his things, so great was the soft beauty of his flesh tints and the grace of his finish." Nearly 400 years have passed since these lines were written, but no connoisseur of to-day would change a word in this appreciation. The work of Correggio appeals to every human being who is susceptible to the indefinable quality of charm. Whether his subject be frankly pagan, as in "The Education of Cupid" at the National Gallery (facing page 62), or avowedly religious, as in his "St. Catherine" at Hampton Court (facing page 66), it is on the satisfaction of the eye, and through the eye of all the senses, that he relies.

So modest was this great colourist, that no portrait of himself by himself is known to exist. "He was content with little," says Vasari, "and lived as a good Christian should." A modern critic, Mr. Berenson, has pronounced Correggio's paintings to be "hymns to the charm of femininity the like of which have never been known before or since in Christian Europe," yet from all accounts this artist's private life was singularly free from amours. Correggio was a model husband and father, and the only thing said against him by his Italian biographer is that he "was anxious to save, like everyone who is burdened with a family, and he thus became excessively miserly." This closeness is said to have brought about his premature death. "Payment of 60 crowns being made to him at Parma in farthings, which he wished to take to Correggio for his affairs, he set out with his burden on foot. Becoming overheated by the warmth of the

sun, he took some water to refresh himself, and caught a severe fever, which terminated his life in the fortieth year of his age."

§ 4

Soon after the death in 1470 of Jacopo Bellini, there arrived in Venice a young Sicilian painter who, without being himself a great master, nevertheless changed the whole course of Italian painting. This was Antonello da Messina (1430–79), who, having seen at Naples in his youth a Flemish picture painted in oils, was so fascinated by the advantages of the new medium, that he went to Flanders and stayed there for some six years till he had thoroughly mastered the new process of painting. Then he returned to Italy, where he generously communicated his secrets to other artists, and so popularised in Italy the Flemish method of oil-painting. Antonello was a skilful painter, both of figures and landscape, as his "Crucifixion," reproduced facing page 53, from the picture in the National Gallery, proves; but unfortunately he died at the age of forty-nine, just when he had received commissions for a number of important paintings, and so we can only judge of his talent by the few small pictures and portraits which have survived.

The Brothers Bellini

Others reaped where Antonello had sown. Already Venetian painters had shown a certain independence in their art. In this maritime port, where sails were more plentiful than trees, pictures had long been painted on canvas, for wood that warps and plaster that scales and falls were ill-suited to resist the damp that came from the canals. Van Eyck's method of oil-painting, introduced by Antonello, was soon found to be more damp-proof than the old method (*tempera*) of mixing pigments with yolk-of-egg, besides being lighter in weight and richer in colour.

Among the first to take advantage of the new method were the two sons of Bellini, who had soon followed their father to

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"ST. CATHERINE," BY CORREGGIO

Hampton Court

All the saints have their symbols. and St. Catherine of Siena is often represented with a book to denote her devotional nature. Correggio, whose art is always sweetly human rather than deeply spiritual shows us the humanity rather than the saintliness of his subject. She might be a modern beauty immersed in a novel. As an exponent of feminine beauty Correggio ranks among the supreme artists of the world.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE FREDIANO ALTAR-PIECE," BY FRANCIA (*circa* 1450–1517)

National Gallery, London.

This altar-piece was commissioned by the Buonvisi Family for its chapel of St. Anne, in the Church of St. Frediano, Lucca. Francia managed to put his own wonderful feeling into the work, and the upper portion, a *Pieta* showing the Virgin and two angels weeping over the dead body of Christ, is of such tragic intensity that the most hardened sceptic can hardly gaze upon it unmoved.

Photo: Anderson.

"CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS," BY GIORGIONE (1477–1510)

Gardner Collection, Boston.

The most beautiful conception of Christ in art, this painting (now in an American collection) is either a study for or a fragment of a lost picture by Giorgione. Formerly the picture hung in a church in Venice, where, according to the sixteenth-century historian Vasari, its haunting loveliness worked miracles of faith among the multitudes who came to see it.

Photo: Anderson.

"THE DOGE BARBERIGO BEFORE THE INFANT CHRIST," BY GIOVANNI BELLINI (*circa* 1430–1516)

Accademia, Venice.

Among Venetian pictures, we possess the Madonna is one of the loveliest in all Italian Art. Bellini has ringed the scene with a magnificent worthy of Venice, whose semi-royal chief magistrate, the Doge Barberigo, kneels in adoration on the Virgin's right, supported by St. Mark[illegible] and on her left by an Archbishop who is probably St. Augustine. Above the pyramid formed by the central group, skyblue sky repeated in the mountains to the right and lower left in the landscape to the left, harmoniously softened by the veiled splendour of Titian's Rest.

Venice after his separation from Squarcione. Gentile, the elder, named after Gentile da Fabriano (Jacopo's first master) was born about 1429; his brother Giovanni was a year or two younger. Both these sons far surpassed their father, and the younger outstripped the elder, but throughout their lives there was no jealousy between them.

"Although the brothers lived apart," says Vasari, "they bore such a respect for each other and for their father, that each one declared himself to be inferior to the other, thus seeking modestly to surpass the other no less in goodness and courtesy than in the excellence of art."

We are told that "the first works of Giovanni were some portraits which gave great satisfaction, especially that of the Doge Loredano." This last is the sumptuous painting, reproduced here as a colour-plate, now hanging in the National Gallery; and from this noble portrait of the Head of the Venetian Republic may be obtained a just idea of Giovanni's power of characterisation and of the splendour of his colour when he was still at the outset of his great career. Impressed by the beauty of his portraits and of numerous altar-pieces which he painted for churches in Venetian territory, the nobles of the city desired this great painter, together with his brother Gentile, "to decorate the hall of the great council with paintings descriptive of the magnificence and greatness of their marvellous city." So, beginning with the brothers Bellini, and afterwards continued by painters of equal eminence, there came into being that unrivalled series of mural paintings in public buildings which makes Venice to-day the most wonderful art-city in the world.

Of all the altar-pieces painted by Giovanni Bellini, the most exquisite is the illustration "The Doge Barberigo Kneeling before the Infant Christ" (facing page 67), a painting formerly in the Church of San Pietro at Murano, but now in the Accademia, Venice. This Madonna is one of the loveliest in all Italian art, serene, majestic, pensive, but altogether human and lovable.

Softness and gentleness always distinguish the work of Giovanni Bellini from that of his brother Gentile, who inclined more to the severity of his brother-in-law Mantegna. Good examples of Gentile Bellini may be seen in the National Gallery, among them being an "Adoration of the Magi" and his portraits of "The Sultan Mohammed II." The last has an interesting history. Although paintings are prohibited by Mohammedan laws, this Sultan saw some portraits by Giovanni Bellini in the possession of the Venetian Ambassador, and, filled with amazement and admiration, he earnestly desired to see the man who could create such marvels. The Venetian Senate, however, was disinclined to let Giovanni leave the city, but allowed his brother Gentile to go in his stead. Gentile arrived at Constantinople, where he "was received graciously and highly favoured," and after painting a number of portraits, including one of the Sultan and one (by request) of himself, the Grand Turk was "convinced that the artist had been assisted by some divine spirit." He wished to reward the artist richly, and "asked him to name any favour which he desired, and it would immediately be granted."

Tactful and courteous, yet conscious that if he unduly prolonged his stay in Turkey he might excite envy and dangerous religious animosity, Gentile replied that he "asked for nothing but a letter of recommendation to the senate and government of his native Venice." Though loath to let him go, the Sultan was as good as his word. The letter was written "in the warmest possible terms, after which he was dismissed with noble gifts and the honour of knighthood."

So Gentile Bellini returned in honour to Venice, where he lived till he was nearly eighty, when "he passed to the other life," says Vasari, "and was honourably buried by his brother in Santi Giovanni e Paolo in the year 1507." His brother Giovanni survived him by some ten years and continued, fine old patriarch that he was, painting portraits till almost the end of

Photo: Anderson.

"THE MADONNA ENTHRONED WITH SS. LIBERALE AND FRANCIS," BY GIORGIONE

Castelfranco, Italy.

This, according to Ruskin, is "one of the two most perfect pictures in existence; alone in the world as an imaginative representation of Christianity, with a monk and a soldier on either side."

Giorgione was only twenty seven years of age when he painted this picture, which proves how early his astounding genius developed

Photo: Bruckmann.

"PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN," BY GIORGIONE

Berlin Gallery

Here, according to the great Italian art critic Morelli, "we have one of those rare portraits such as only Giorgione, and occasionally Titian, were capable of producing, highly suggestive, and exercising over the spectator an irresistible fascination."

Note the mysterious "VV" on the parapet. These letters are found in other portraits by Giorgione, and Dr. G. C. Williamson has suggested that they probably indicate the artist's signature, since Giorgione's name was spelt as "Zorzon" or "Zorzi" da Castelfrano by contemporary writers, and in old MSS. the capital Z is frequently made like a V.

his days. "At length," says our historian, "when Giovanni had attained to the age of ninety years, he passed from the troubles of this life, leaving an everlasting name by the works which he produced in his native Venice and elsewhere. He was buried in the same church where he had previously laid his brother Gentile."

§ 5

The Romance of Giorgione

Justly famous by right of his own paintings, Giovanni is also renowned as the master of some of the greatest painters Venice ever saw, chief among his pupils being Giorgione and Titian. The first was born at Castelfranco in 1470, and was christened Giorgio, but "from his stature and the greatness of his mind he was afterwards known as Giorgione," that is to say, "Great George." Though of peasant origin, contemporaries say he was "well bred and polished all his life." He was of a loving disposition and exceedingly fond of the lute, "playing and singing divinely," and this love of music became the new note which Giorgione definitely contributed to art, for not only did he frequently introduce music as a subject in his pictures (*e.g.* "The Concert" at Dresden, and the man playing a mandolin in "The Golden Age" at the National Gallery, and the "Fête Champêtre" or Musical Party in the Louvre), but all his pictures, as Walter Pater wrote, "constantly aspire to the condition of music." By this it is meant that everything in a Giorgione is subordinated to beauty, and that his first concern is to create *melody* of line and *harmony* of colour.

The gentle nature of the artist, who found grace and loveliness in all men and all things, can be traced in every work of his that has survived the storms of time. In his great altar-piece "Madonna Enthroned, with St. Liberale and St. Francis," for his native hill-town of Castelfranco, painted before he was thirty,

Giorgione charms us alike by the rhythm and balance of the whole composition and by the lovableness of his types. The sweet simplicity of young womanhood in the Virgin, the naturalness of the Child, the knightliness of the soldier-saint Liberale, the welcoming gesture of the nature-loving Saint who could preach to birds and fishes and call them his brethren—all these things are manifest in the illustration of this beautiful picture (facing page 68).

It is a great misfortune that so many of Giorgione's paintings have been lost or destroyed in the course of centuries. Barely a score are known for certain to exist to-day, but among them are some of the most splendid portraits in the world. His "Young Man" in the Berlin Gallery (facing page 69) and his "Unknown Man" in the Querini-Stampalia Collection at Venice (facing page 70) are presented here as examples of his power in portraiture.

Vasari tells us that Giorgione "did a picture of Christ bearing the Cross and a Jew dragging him along, which after a time was placed in the Church of St. Rocco, and now works miracles, as we see, through the devotion of the multitudes who visit it." We can form some idea of what the exceeding beauty of this painting must have been from the unforgettable head of "Christ Bearing the Cross," which still exists in the private collection of Mrs. Gardner, of Boston, U.S.A., and which is reproduced facing page 66.

But, alas! not a fragment has survived of the famous picture which Giorgione painted to prove the superiority of painting to sculpture. While Verrocchio was in Venice engaged upon the bronze horse of his splendid Colleone Monument, his admirers argued that sculpture, which presented so many aspects of a figure, was superior to painting. Giorgione maintained that a painting could show at a single glance all the aspects that a man can present, while sculpture can only do so if one walks about it, and thus he proved his contention:

Photo: Anderson.

"AN UNKNOWN MAN," BY GIORGIONE

Querini-Stampalia Collection, Venice.

This unfinished portrait, probably of a member of the Querini family, is extraordinarily attractive in its colour-scheme of rich browns and reds. It represents a style of portraiture invented by Giorgione, which his pupil Titian afterwards adopted and developed.

"ADRASTUS AND HYPSIPYLE," BY GIORGIONE

Giovannelli Palace, Venice.

Nominally an illustration of the Greek legend how King Adrastus found Queen Hypsipyle disguised as a nurse (after she had been driven out of Lemnos by a conspiracy), this picture is famous as the first expression in art of a stormy landscape. It is a supreme example of Giorgione's skill in pattern building: note how beautifully the broken columns, almost in the centre of the foreground, balance not only the figure of the Queen, but also the tall buildings beyond the bridge.

> He painted a nude figure turning its shoulders; at its feet was a limpid fount of water, the reflection from which showed the front. On one side was a burnished corselet, which had been taken off and gave a side view, because the shining metal reflected everything. On the other side was a mirror showing the other side of the figure.

The scarcity of Giorgione's work is partly explained by the fact that he died young. In 1510 he was deeply in love with a Venetian lady, who caught the plague, but "Giorgione, being ignorant of this, associated with her as usual, took the infection, and died soon after at the age of thirty-four, to the infinite grief of his friends, who loved him for his talents, and to the damage of the world which lost him."

V

THE SPLENDOUR OF VENICE

THE SPLENDOUR OF VENICE

THE ART OF TITIAN, TINTORETTO, LOTTO, MORONI, AND PAUL VERONESE

§ 1

How Old was Titian?

WE never think of Titian as a young man; to all of us he is the Grand Old Man of Italian art, and there is something patriarchal in his figure. He was, indeed, very old when he died. Some would make out that he lived to be ninety-nine, but there is considerable doubt whether he was really as old as he pretended to be. The National Gallery catalogue queries 1477 as the year of Titian's birth, but few modern historians consider this to be accurate. The date 1477 is only given by the artist in a begging letter to King Philip of Spain, when it was to Titian's advantage to make himself out to be older than he was, because he was trying to squeeze money out of a rather tight-fisted monarch on the score of his great age.

Vasari and other contemporary writers give 1489 as the date of birth, but probably the nearest approach to the truth is given in a letter (dated December 8, 1567) from the Spanish Consul in Venice (Thomas de Cornoca), which fixes the year of Titian's birth as 1482. This would make Titian to have been ninety-four when he died.

Whether Titian lived to be ninety-four or, as Sir Herbert Cook thinks, only eighty-nine, is a small matter compared to the greater fact that he was born in the hill-town of Cadore on

a spur of the Alps, and spent his boyhood amid solemn pine-woods and Alpine solitudes. Breathing the keen mountain air, he grew up a young Hercules, deep-chested, his features "sun-browned as if cast in bronze," his eyes clear, with an eagle glance bred of Alpine distances.

So the young Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) came to Venice, a hardy mountaineer among the children of the plain, and all his art bears the impress of his origin. What we call the idealism of Titian is not the result of æsthetic reflection, but, as Muther has pointed out, "the natural point of view of a man who wandered upon the heights of life, never knew trivial care, nor even experienced sickness; and therefore saw the world healthy and beautiful, in gleaming and majestic splendour."

By the early death of Giorgione in 1510, Titian was left without a rival in his own generation, and six years later (1516), when Bellini died, Titian was elected to succeed him as the official painter of Venice. Thenceforward his career was a royal progress. "All princes, learned men, and distinguished persons who came to Venice visited Titian," says Vasari, for "not only in his art was he great, but he was a nobleman in person." He lived in a splendid palace, where he received Royalty, and was able to give his beautiful daughter and his two sons every conceivable luxury, for Titian, says Vasari, "gained a fair amount of wealth, his labours having always been well paid."

Of the dramatic quality in Titian's art we have a splendid instance at the National Gallery in the "Bacchus and Ariadne" (facing page 77), which, painted about 1520, is also a famous example of Venetian colour. Nobody before had given so dramatic and impassioned a rendering of Bacchus, the God of Wine, leaping from his chariot to console and cherish Ariadne, the beautiful maiden forsaken by her false lover Theseus. There is action not only in the drawing, in the spirited rendering of movement, but there is life also in the colour; the amber, ruby, and sapphire of the flowing draperies sparkle, quiver, and radiate.

Photo: Anderson.

"FLORA," BY TITIAN (*circa* 1482–1576)

Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

"The high summer of womanhood, in her rich, mature splendour." So a great critic has described this beautiful example of Titian's idealised figure painting. The artist only used models "in case of necessity," and this conception of Flora, the Goddess of Spring, though so intensely alive that we feel she is real, probably only existed in the imagination of the artist.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"BACCHUS AND ARIADNE," BY TITIAN

National Gallery, London.

Bacchus, the God of Wine, leaps from his triumphal car to console and cherish the maiden Ariadne, who has been forsaken by her false lover. This painting is world-famous for the glory of its lovely, sparkling colour, and for an intensity of dramatic action unsurpassed in art.

Whence came these qualities so new to Venetian painting? They came from the great painter's memories of his birthplace, his boyhood's home beside the River Piave roaring down from storm-capped heights, from memories of the wind that swept through the tree-tops and rattled the rafters of the house. Familiar from childhood with the awe-inspiring, dramatic elements of Nature, Titian expressed her majesty and drama in his art.

Amid the wealth of pictorial beauty left by Titian it is difficult indeed to say which is his supreme masterpiece. According to Vasari, Titian's "Assumption of the Virgin" (facing page 85) was held by his fellow-citizens to be "the best modern painting," and though it is no longer modern but an "old master," we cannot conceive a more impressive rendering of the subject than this picture, in which we almost hear the wind caused by the soaring ascent of the Virgin, her garments grandly swelling in the breeze by which the encircling cherubs waft her upwards.

"Sacred and Profane Love"

Yet to this great painting of his mature years (1541) at least one of his earlier pictures is equal in beauty. To the transitional period of Titian's life, while the direct influence of Giorgione yet lingered, belongs the picture in the Borghese Gallery, Rome, known as "Sacred and Profane Love." But the title is only a makeshift. Nobody knows the true meaning of this picture of two lovely women, one lightly draped, the other in the full splendour of Venetian dress, seated on either side of a well in the midst of a smiling landscape. There is a tradition that the one represents "Heavenly Love," the other "Earthly Love" (facing pages 82-83), but on the other hand a passage in Vasari about another painting by Titian, now lost, gives countenance to the theory that these figures are personifications of Grace and Beauty, or more probably Grace and Truth. A third theory is that the picture illustrates a passage in some lost poem.

His Ideal of Womanhood

Titian's ideal of womanhood is seen not only in this picture, which inspired Mr. Arnold Bennett's novel with the same title, but in a number of exquisite portraits and figure paintings. According to Vasari, he painted mostly from his own imagination, and only used female models in case of necessity. Titian's types have little in common with the small, brown, black-eyed maidens we usually associate with Venice. They are nearer akin to the fair-haired Lombard women or the Dianas and Junos of his Alpine home. Further, it is the proud majesty of the mature woman that he paints. His beautiful "Flora" (facing page 76) in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, does not suggest springtime but, as Dr. Muther has well said, "high summer in its rich, mature splendour." Never old, but never very young, Titian's "mighty women" seem to "beam in an eternal powerful beauty."

The same mature majesty characterises "The Magdalen" (facing page 79), to which his contemporary Vasari pays the following eloquent tribute: "Her hair falls about her neck and shoulders, her head is raised, and the eyes are fixed on Heaven, their redness and the tears still within them giving evidence of her sorrow for the sins of her past life. This picture, which is most beautiful, moves all who behold it to compassion."

"He touched nothing that he did not adorn." So it might be written of Titian, who ennobled all his sitters with something of his own majesty. The supreme example of his powers in this direction is the magnificent "Equestrian Portrait of Charles V" (facing page 78), in the Prado at Madrid. In 1530, when the Emperor Charles V was in Bologna, Titian by the intervention of his friend the poet Pietro Aretino, was invited to that city and commissioned to paint His Catholic Majesty in full armour. Vasari tells us the Emperor was so delighted with this portrait that he gave the artist a thousand gold crowns, declaring that he would never have his portrait done by any other painter; and he kept his imperial word, frequently employing

Photo: Anderson.

"CHARLES V," BY TITIAN
Prado, Madrid

[illegible] great General in battle, and [illegible] of Destiny [illegible] this [illegible] what the genius of Titian has made of this portrait Charles V was both King of Spain and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

Titian has seized on one great moment in this monarch's life and pictured him riding at day[illegible] before the battle in which his troops were victorious

Photo: Anderson.

"THE MAGDALEN," BY TITIAN

Pitti Gallery, Florence.

"The picture, most beautiful, moves all who behold it to compassion," writes Vasari, a contemporary of Titian. "The eyes fixed on Heaven, their redness and the tears still within them giving evidence of her sorrow for the sins of her past life."

Titian thereafter and always paying him 1,000 crowns for each portrait.

"The Man of Destiny"

Never was money better spent. This Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Spain still fires our imagination, thanks to Titian. The historical truth about Charles V is that he was a pale, scrofulous, emaciated man, a prey to melancholy, full of hesitations and superstitious fears; so world-weary that in the end he abdicated from his imperial position, and shut himself up in a monastery where, with morbid satisfaction, surrounded by coffins and ticking clocks, he constantly rehearsed his own funeral. Titian shows us nothing of this. His wonderful imagination fastens on one great moment in the Emperor's life, the day when he was the victor at Augsburg. A Black Knight in steel armour, riding over the battlefield at daybreak, the Emperor in this painting becomes "the personification of the coldness of a great general in battle, and of Destiny itself approaching, silent and unavoidable." Charles is here Napoleonic—but Napoleon had no Titian to immortalise his grandeur. Who would not pay a thousand crowns to be so transfigured for posterity?

Still painting in his ninetieth year with unabated vigour, still able as a nonagenarian to play the host with undiminished magnificence to King Henry III of France, this grand old patriarch finally went down in 1576, like some battered but indomitable man-of-war, with his colours still proudly flying. Even then it was not of old age that he died: he was a victim to the same pestilence which, sixty-six years earlier, had carried off his young fellow-pupil Giorgione. All Venice went into mourning when the greatest of her sons passed away, and the Senate set aside the decree that excluded victims of the plague from burial within church walls, so that Titian might be laid to rest in the Church of the Frari, within sight of his own picture of "The Assumption."

§ 2

Tintoretto

The glowing mantle of Titian fell on the shoulders of Jacopo Robusti, nicknamed Tintoretto (the "Little Dyer") from the calling of his father, Battista Robusti, who was a dyer, in Italian *tintore*. Tintoretto was born at Venice in 1518 and, having shown his precocious genius by covering the walls of his father's house with drawings and sketches, he was apprenticed as a pupil to Titian. Despite his prodigious capacity, for already the skill and speed of his workmanship were astonishing, he was not a satisfactory pupil. After some time Titian dismissed him, according to one account because he was jealous of his pupil, according to another because Tintoretto "would in no wise give obedience to commands." From all we know of Tintoretto's proud, wilful character the latter reason seems probable.

The First "Hustler" in Art

Left to himself Tintoretto set up his own workshop, in which he nailed up the legend "The Design of Michael Angelo and the Colouring of Titian." Not only did he live up to his motto as regards his drawing and colour, but to these he added his own supreme understanding of light and shade; and thus he was able to surpass Titian in the keenness of his liberal yet romantic observation, and to outdo even Michael Angelo himself in the furious speed and energy of his execution. Amazing stories are told of Tintoretto's activity. "This artist," remarks his contemporary Vasari, "always contrives by the most singular proceedings in the world to be constantly employed, seeing that when the good offices of his friends and other methods have failed to procure him any work of which there is question, he will nevertheless manage to obtain it, either by accepting it at a very low price, by doing it as a gift, or even by seizing on it by force."

An instance of this kind occurred when the Brotherhood of

"THE TAILOR," BY GIAMBATTISTA MORONI (1525?-1578)
National Gallery, London

San Rocco decided to have the ceiling of their refectory painted with decorations. The four leading painters of Venice, Zucchero, Salviati, Veronese, and Tintoretto, were summoned to San Rocco and invited to submit designs for the project. It was announced that the commission would be given to the artist who produced the best design. "But while the other artists were giving themselves with all diligence to the preparation of their designs, Tintoretto made an exact measurement of the space for which the picture was required, and taking a large canvas, he painted it without saying a word to any one and, with his usual celerity, putting it up in the place destined to receive it.

"One morning, therefore, when the Brotherhood had assembled to see the designs and to determine the matter, they found that Tintoretto had entirely completed the work, nay, that he had fixed it in its place."

Naturally the three other artists were furious, and the head of the Brotherhood angrily inquired why Tintoretto had taken it on himself to complete the work when he had only been asked to submit a design in an open competition.

"This is my method of preparing designs," answered Tintoretto; "I do not know how to make them in any other manner. All designs and models for a work should be executed in this fashion, to the end that the persons interested may see what it is intended to offer them, and may not be deceived.

"If you do not think it proper to pay for the work and remunerate me for my pains, then," the artist proudly added, "I will make you a present of it."

Thus, as Vasari relates, Tintoretto, "though not without opposition, contrived so to manage matters that the picture still retains its place."

The Largest Painting in the World

Though he painted numerous portraits and altar-pieces, Tintoretto was essentially a decorative painter, and his mightiest

achievements are on the walls and ceilings of the palaces and public buildings of Venice. His "Paradiso" in the Ducal Palace is the largest painting in the world, eighty-four feet wide by thirty-four feet high, and of this stupendous achievement and of most of his other great works no photograph can give any adequate idea. For this reason no attempt to reproduce them is made here. But fortunately the picture which is universally acknowledged to be Tintoretto's masterpiece is not on the same colossal scale. "The Miracle of St. Mark" (facing page 86) is one of four large pictures painted by Tintoretto for the School of San Marco, Venice. It represents the Evangelist—who was the Patron Saint of Venice—appearing in the air and "delivering a man who was his votary from grievous torments, which an executioner is seen to be preparing for him: the irons which the tormentors are endeavouring to apply break short in their hands, and cannot be turned against that devout man."

The dramatic element in Titian's work is seen heightened and intensified in many of Tintoretto's paintings, but nowhere is it more splendidly manifest than in this impressive imagining of a supernatural event. Again we seem to hear the rush of air caused by the downward sweep of the Saint, from whom a celestial light irradiates. This great picture is not only an illustration of a saintly legend; it had a symbolical meaning of great importance to Tintoretto's contemporaries. At this time political relations between Venice and Rome were strained. The Patriarch and Senate of Venice flattered themselves they were better Christians than the Romans and were delighted to see in Tintoretto's masterpiece a picture in which they saw the Popes as the executioners of the Church, which is to be saved only by the fortunate interference of the Republic of St. Mark.

When Tintoretto died in 1594 there were no more great religious painters in Italy. Unlike Titian, who "had never received from Heaven aught but favour and felicity" and so throughout a long life looked out with ever joyous eyes, Tinto-

Photo: Anderson.

"SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE" (DETAIL), BY TITIAN

Borghese Gallery, Rome.

According to tradition, this figure is supposed to typify "Earthly Love," and the one following "Heavenly Love"; but since in the picture these two women are seated on either side of a well, others have interpreted them as Grace and Truth.

Photo: Anderson.

"SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE" (DETAIL) BY TITIAN

Borghese Gallery, Rome

Various conjectures have been made as to the meaning of these figures (see page 77), but the world is content to accept them as supreme examples of Titian's conception of feminine beauty

retto, notwithstanding his professional prosperity, was overshadowed by a spiritual gloom which finds expression in his mighty pictures. The works of his manhood and maturity show little of that serene joy in existence which glows from the canvases of Titian; but in the fitful lighting of their sombre depths, in a constantly recurring hint of tragedy, they reveal a consciousness of stormy days to come, of perils for Church and State, which entitle us to see in Tintoretto a harbinger of the Reformation and the wars of religion.

§ 3

The Worldy Veronese

Working side by side first with Titian, afterwards with Tintoretto, was Paolo Cagliari, who, from Verona the city of his birth, was known as Paul Veronese (1528-88). The whole splendour of Venice is revealed in his paintings and his decorations in the Ducal Palace give immortality to the pageantry which characterised the Italy of his time.

When the Venetian Senate gave a festival in honour of King Henry III of France, the monarch was received (so history tells us) by two hundred of the fairest damsels in the city, dressed in white and covered with pearls and diamonds, "so that the King thought he had suddenly entered a realm of goddesses and fairies."

This is the realm we enter through a canvas by Veronese, whether his subject be professedly historical, as in "The Family of Darius before Alexander," National Gallery, or professedly religious, as in "The Marriage at Cana" (facing page 84) at Dresden. We have only to look at this painting with all its worldly pomp and ostentatious luxury to see how far art has travelled from the simple piety of the earlier Primitive Masters.

The monasteries were the chief employers of Veronese, as the eminent critic Mr. Berenson has pointed out:—"His

cheerfulness, and his frank and joyous worldliness—the qualities, in short, which we find in his huge pictures of feasts—seem to have been particularly welcome to those who were expected to make their meat and drink of the very opposite qualities. This is no small comment on the times and shows how thorough had been the permeation of the spirit of the Renaissance when even the religious orders gave up their pretence to asceticism and piety."

A time came, however, when Veronese went too far even for the depraved ecclesiastics of his day. When he painted "The Last Supper"—now in the Louvre—in the style of "The Marriage at Cana," with the same glitter of crystal, silver, and jewels, the same sheen of silks and satins, the same multitude of serving men and attendants, the stricter clerics were scandalised. Information was laid against the painter, and on July 18, 1573, Paul Veronese was summoned before the tribunal of the Inquisition.

Rebuked by the Inquisition

Exactly what happened then is not clearly known: while escaping banishment or severe punishment, the artist was sternly rebuked for his wordly treatment of religious subjects; and though the reprimand appears to have had little permanent effect on his paintings, it is significant to note that his "Adoration of the Magi" in the National Gallery, which is dated 1573, is both in conception and in execution far more simple and respectful than are the majority of Veronese's pictures of sacred subjects.

The most beautiful picture by Veronese in the National Gallery, and one of the most haunting of all his works, is "St. Helena's Vision of the Cross" (facing page 88), which is as reposeful as a piece of antique Greek sculpture and a superbly decorative example of the artist's skill as a maker of patterns. The curious will note in this work how cunningly the painter

Photo: Alinari.

"THE MARRIAGE IN CANA," BY PAUL VERONESE (1528–88)

Dresden Gallery.

The luxurious pomp of a Venetian banquet is shown in this sixteenth-century painting, which is far removed from the simple piety of the earlier Italian masters. Veronese, whose opulent sense of colour and splendid design made him one of the great decorative painters of his day, was rebuked by the Inquisition for his worldly rendering of sacred subjects.

Photo: Anderson.

"THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN," BY TITIAN.

Church of the Frari, Venice.

Titian's dramatic imagination, rich and powerful both in portraiture and in allegorical decorations for palaces, is here seen applied with equal genius and deep feeling to the rendering of a religious subject.

This picture, formerly in the Academy, Venice, but since the war restored to its original position in the Church of the Frari, was thought by Titian's contemporaries to be 'the best modern painting."

has arranged the figure to secure decorative balance and rhythm, how the right leg continuing the line of the forearm repeats the diagonal of the cross, while the sharp horizontal of the cherub's wing repeats the line of the window-sill. In these devices we recognise the hand of a master-craftsman.

§ 4

A greater than Veronese remians to be mentioned, a painter who was not only a consummate craftsman but also a profound thinker. This was Lorenzo Lotto (1480–1556), who, unlike his great contemporaries, was Venetian born. All the others—save Tintoretto, greatly his junior—came from the mainland: Giorgione from Castelfranco, Titian from Cadore, and Cagliari from Verona.

The Soul of Lotto

Few painters have lived so intense a life in the spirit as Lotto; none has written so plainly as he his soul-history in his works. A true son of Venice, his youthful mind turned to Byzantium rather than to Rome for instruction and inspiration. To him Giorgione and Titian appeared as foreign intruders; their worldliness shocked him, a follower of Savonarola. Lotto began by putting the Madonna back on a Byzantine throne in the apse of the church from which the painters of the Renaissance had taken her. Ploughing his lonely furrow at Venice he had his doubts, and in 1508 he journeyed south to see what Rome and Raphael had to teach him. What he saw there roused his reforming zeal, as it had that of Savonarola. Four years later (1512) he fled from metropolitan sinfulness and took refuge in the provincial tranquillity of Bergamo.

Here he possessed his soul in peace, and as though touched by the spirit of St. Francis he became reconciled to nature. No longer is the Madonna enthroned in church, but placed in the open country, where all existing things seem to praise the

Creator in their beauty. Lotto became a pantheist and his message is the gospel of love. With his Venetian predecessors and contemporaries the Virgin is either soulful and humble, or aristocratic and proud; Lotto paints her richly adorned, but imbues her countenance with a beneficent and tenderly maternal expression.

In portraiture Lotto is supreme even in a great epoch. When we look at his portrait in the National Gallery of "The Protonotary Apostolic Juliano" (facing p. 87), noting through the window the wide and boundless landscape traversed by a river which winds its way to the distant sea, noting also the exquisite Flemish-like painting of the still-life accessories, as well as the grave penetrating characterisation of the man, we cannot agree with Dr. Muther that Lotto regards his sitters "unconcerned with their decorative appearance"; but we do heartily agree that Lotto shows us people "in their hours of introspection."

Why is it that Lotto, as a portrait-painter, strikes chords which, as Dr. Muther says, "are echoed in no other Italian work"? The explanation is this: "Only those whom he loved and honoured were invited into his studio, and this circumstance alone differentiates his portraits from those of Raphael or Titian."

Though never such a great figure in his day as Giorgione, Titian, or Tintoretto, Lotto was not without influence on his contemporaries. One who felt it and gained by it greatly was a painter who came from Brescia to Venice, Giambattista Moroni (*c.* 1520–78). His "Portrait of a Tailor," which is reproduced as a colour-plate, is full of human sympathy and almost perfect in craftsmanship. It is deservedly one of the most popular portraits in the National Gallery, and many of us feel almost equally drawn to Moroni's other great portrait at the National Gallery, "An Italian Nobleman" (facing page 89). Together they prove that, like Lotto, Moroni could extend his

Photo: Anderson.

"THE MIRACLE OF ST. MARK," BY TINTORETTO (1518–94).

Academy, Venice.

Tintoretto, the most famous pupil of Titian, illustrates in this dramatic picture the legend of how St. Mark, the patron saint of Venice, rescued a Christian slave from Pagan torturers.

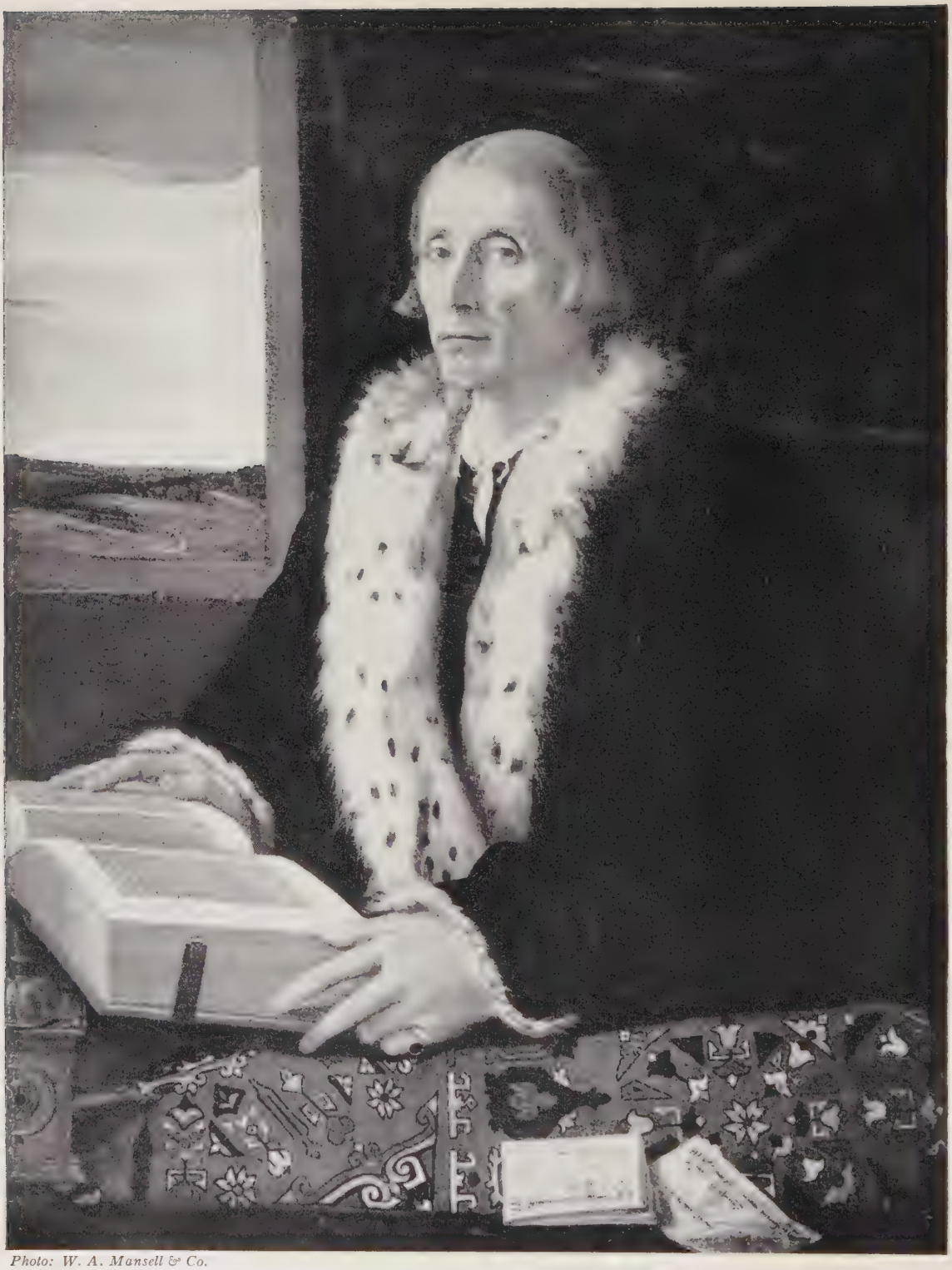

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE PROTONOTARY APOSTOLIC JULIANO," BY LORENZO LOTTO (1480–1556)

National Gallery, London.

"He looks out from his canvas as if begging for sympathy." So a modern American critic has written of this noble and dignified portrait by the most spiritual of all the great Venetian masters of the sixteenth century. Lotto was remarkable for his pious conservatism (see page 85), and would undertake the portraiture of no persons unless he respected their character.

sympathies to sitters irrespective of their rank or position in life.

It is not easy to over-estimate the abundant excellence of portraiture in sixteenth-century Venice. Just as the wealth and power of her merchant-citizens were the source of the success of the republican State of Venice, so the luxury they were able to afford drew to the island-city of the Adriatic all the artistic talent born on the neighbouring mainland. Of the multitude of artists who during this century were adorning the public buildings and private palaces of Venice, only a few of the most celebrated can here be enumerated. Cima came from Conegliano to Venice in 1492 and worked there till 1516 or later, carrying on in his Madonnas the tradition of Giovanni Bellini. Vincenzo di Biagio, known as Catena, was born at Treviso about 1470 and died at Venice in 1531. He was greatly influenced by Giorgione, to whom was once ascribed the beautiful painting "A Warrior Adoring the Infant Christ," which the National Gallery catalogue now gives definitely to Catena. Sebastiano del Piombo (*c.* 1485-1547), who about 1510 left Venice for Rome, where he was influenced by Raphael and Michael Angelo, has a special interest for us because his picture "The Raising of Lazarus" was the beginning of the National Gallery collection. It is still "Number 1." Palma Vecchio (1480-1528) was born near Bergamo, but came to Venice while still a student. Influenced first by Bellini and Giorgione, afterwards by Titian and Lotto, he very nearly reached the first rank, as his "Venus and Cupid," now in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, amply proves. He is called Vecchio (= Old) to distinguish him from a later painter Palma Giovine (1544-1628) or Young Palma.

Jacopo da Ponte (1510-92), called Bassano from his birthplace, is also splendidly represented in the National Gallery by "The Good Samaritan," a painting which used to belong to Sir Joshua Reynolds. It is a magnificent example of vigour and muscular action.

In the art, as in the State of Venice, the spark of life lin-

gered long. So late as the eighteenth century, Longhi, Canaletto, and Guardi painted delightfully her canals and palaces and the life of her public places, while Giambattista Tiepolo (1696-1770), painting in the tradition of Veronese, earned for himself the proud title "the last of the Old Masters."

But with Tintoretto the last great word of Italy had been spoken, and when he died in 1594 it was left to the artists of other lands to take up the tale.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"ST HELENA'S VISION OF THE CROSS," BY PAUL VERONESE

National Gallery, London.

Reposeful as a piece of antique Greek sculpture, this beautiful painting is also an illuminating example of the artist's skill in pattern-making. Note how the very angle of the Cross seen by the Saint in her vision, is so arranged as to repeat the lines of her forearm and skirt, thus securing a symmetry which completes the rhythm and decorative aspect of the whole picture.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"ITALIAN NOBLEMAN," BY MORONI (*circa* 1520–78)

National Gallery, London.

All things to all men, Moroni, the most accomplished disciple of Lorenzo Lotto, could depict an Italian nobleman with the same sympathetic skill and dignity that have made his "Portrait of a Tailor" one of the world masterpieces of portraiture.

VI

THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION

THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION

THE ART OF ALBERT DURER AND OF HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

§ 1

SO far we have been following mainly the development of art in Italy, but that country had no monopoly of painting and sculpture during the Middle Ages. It was shown in the Second Chapter of this OUTLINE how a band of painters flourished on the banks of the Rhine during the fourteenth century.

Ever since the time of the Van Eycks paintings had been produced by natives of most of the great countries of Europe—even in England, where Odo the Goldsmith was employed by King Henry III to execute wall-paintings for the Palace of Westminster—but either because their work was not powerful enough to capture the imagination of Europe or, quite as probably, because they had no historians and biographers to trumpet their praises, the early artists of England, France, and Germany never acquired the fame won by their brethren of Italy and Flanders. With few exceptions their names, and in many cases their works, have been entirely lost.

> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Why Italy Led the Way

When all has been said, however, the fact remains that Italy was the centre of the world for mediæval Europe, and to it came all who were desirous of learning, culture, and advancement. In those times the painter born elsewhere made his way to Italy as naturally and inevitably as the artist of to-day makes his pilgrimage to Paris; and in Italy the stranger artist was treated, not as a foreigner, but as a provincial. Looking at the political divisions of Europe to-day, we are apt to forget that in the Middle Ages the Christian nations of Europe were considered to be one family. Just as the Pope of Rome was the religious Head of all Christendom, so in theory, if not in practice, its secular Head was the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The capital of that Empire, again in theory, was Rome, though in practice the Emperor was usually not very safe outside his own kingdom in Germany.

When the Italian historian Vasari describes the great German artist Albert Durer as a "Fleming," he is making the same sort of mistake that a Londoner might make when he was uncertain whether a west-countryman came from Devon or Cornwall; and just as some Londoners are so narrow-minded that they cannot imagine any pre-eminent greatness outside the metropolis, so Vasari in a patronising way wrote of Durer:

> Had this man, so nobly endowed by Nature, so assiduous, and possessed of so many talents, been a native of Tuscany instead of Flanders, had he been able to study the treasures of Rome and Florence as we have done, he would have excelled us all, as he is now the best and most esteemed among his own countrymen.

The Story of a Paint-brush

If Vasari thought this talented man had much to learn from Italy, there were Italian artists who thought they had something

Photo: Anderson.

"PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER WHEN YOUNG," BY ALBERT DÜRER (1471-1528)

Prado, Madrid.

Painted when the artist was only twenty-seven, this beautiful portrait of himself shows the mature precision of a master in every detail. Note the wonderful painting of the long wavy tresses, a feat which caused the Venetian artist Bellini to believe Dürer had a special brush for painting hair (see page 3).

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE"

From a Wood-Engraving by Durer.

The four riders are Conquest, aiming afar with his arrow; War, with a drawn sword; Famine; and Death. Note the original conception of the third rider, whose rich costume and well-nourished body betray Durer's opinion of the War-Profiteer who fattens himself on the famine of others (see page 95).

The most wonderful work of art ever inspired by the Book of Revelation (vi. 2–8), this magnificent design displays Durer's inventiveness as a decorative craftsman and the power and originality of his imagination. In our own day it has a peculiar fascination as revealing an Old Master's view of war.

to learn from Durer. Giovanni Bellini, whose art has been described in Chapter IV, greatly admired Durer's painting, and found his rendering of hair so marvellous that he thought the artist must have a special brush for the purpose. So when Durer visited Venice and in his polite way offered to do anything in his power for Venetian artists, Bellini begged to be given the brush with which he painted hairs. Durer picked up a handful of his brushes and told Bellini to choose any one he wished. "I mean the brush with which you draw several hairs with one stroke," the Venetian explained. Durer smiled and replied, "I use no other than these, and to prove it you may watch me." Then, taking up one of the same brushes, he drew "some very long wavy tresses, such as women generally wear." Bellini looked on wonderingly, and afterwards confessed that had he not seen it nothing would have convinced him that such painting was possible.

The Goldsmith of Nuremberg

Who was this Durer? Strangely enough the artist who most fully revealed the spirit of awakening Germany was of Hungarian descent. His father, Albert Durer the Elder—whose portrait by his son hangs in the National Gallery, London—was born in Hungary. After travelling in the Netherlands for some time, he finally settled in Nuremberg, where his son was born on May 21, 1471. Albert the Younger had everything to foster the development of his gifts, his father was a goldsmith, and his grandfather also; hence their removal to Nuremberg, a city which was in constant communication with Venice and had already begun to rival it in the arts and crafts of jewellery and metalwork. It is worth noticing that young Albert's godfather was the bookseller and expert printer Anton Koberger, and through him his godson probably became familiar with fine prints and engravings from his earliest years.

The father intended the son to succeed him in his craft, but

as the latter tells us in his memoirs, "I was more inclined to painting, and this I confessed to my father. My father was not pleased," he adds with characteristic simplicity. Nevertheless young Durer got his way, and in 1486 was apprenticed to Michael Wohlgemut, a local artist then at the zenith of his fame. Wohlgemut had a large art school, which was the most important in Nuremberg, and here young Durer learnt to paint and also, possibly, to practise wood-engraving. But such a master had little to teach so brilliant a pupil, and after three years Durer the Elder wisely took his son away and sent him abroad for four years. Young Albert travelled in the south of Germany and probably paid his first visit to Venice during this period.

Returning to Nuremberg in 1494, Albert Durer—as we shall henceforth call him—married almost immediately Agnes Frei, daughter of a respected citizen. The young artist already had some reputation: in 1497 he painted the portrait of his father, and in the following year the splendid portrait of himself which we reproduce. This comparatively early work, now at Madrid, shows all the characteristics of his later portraits; it has a simple dignity almost amounting to austerity, remarkable penetration into character, and in execution it shows perfect mastery of drawing and colouring.

"The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse"

In 1498 Albert Durer published a series of wood-engravings illustrating the Apocalypse, which greatly increased his reputation, for in these he was able to show not only the perfection of his drawing and design, but also the extraordinary power of his imagination. No design in this series is more famous than "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (see opposite page 93), which has recently become still more widely known by the popular novel of Ibanez and the film with the same title, both of which were directly inspired by Durer's masterpiece.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

LANDSCAPE DETAIL (FROM "THE RAPE OF AMYONE"), BY DURER

Durer's love of nature, which found expression in his delicate yet vigorous drawing of trees, shrubs, and clouds, is seen in this landscape.

THE POPE.

THE MISER.

THE HUSBANDMAN.

FROM HOLBEIN'S "DANCE OF DEATH"

Like the old morality play "Everyman," this ancient picture-sequence (see page 104) was intended to drive home the inescapable truth that "in the midst of life we are in death." With a pictorial pagentry unapproached in any previous or later rendering of the subject, Holbein here shows us Death dogging the footsteps of the Pope (and Cardinal), the Miser, and the Husbandman.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE GREAT FORTUNE," BY DURER

No work has roused more controversy than this famous design, in which Durer imaginatively shows "Fortune" or "Nemesis" with bridles in her left hand to curb the "mad designs" of the proud.

If we are unable to admire the "goddess" we can all see the beauty of the landscape beneath, and viewed from a distance or reversed the rhythmical disposition of the black and white in this engraving makes it stand out as a fascinating pattern.

> And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering and to conquer. . . . And another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given to him a great sword. . . . And I saw, and behold a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice . . . saying, A measure of wheat for a penny . . . and behold a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death.

These are the verses from Revelation (vi. 2-8) which Durer set himself to illustrate; and since it was executed in a period just previous to the Reformation, some critics have argued that its inner meaning is an attack on the Papacy. It is improbable, however, that Durer was at this time in any way actuated by religious bias; the series as a whole certainly attacks corruption, both lay and ecclesiastical, but in this woodcut, the most famous of the series, it is more likely that Durer confined himself strictly to his text. The Holy Roman Empire was in a chronic state of war, and Durer must have seen enough of fighting in his youth and early manhood to know who and what were the grim companions of conquest. The meaning of this magnificent rushing design is clear; it reveals Durer's view of War, war which sweeps mercilessly on, sparing neither man nor woman, priest nor layman, and inevitably accompanied by Famine, Pestilence, and Death. The most subtle touch of satire is the third rider with the balances. In portraying Famine as this sleek, well-nourished, handsomely clothed man, Durer seems to hint that he is not ignorant of the existence of the War-Profiteer. The emaciated horse and its rider by his side tell their own tale.

It was by his engravings still more than by his paintings that Durer became famous, for the prints spread throughout Europe and created a great sensation. But though invited to

become a citizen of Venice or Antwerp by these municipalities, Durer remained loyal to his native city. He continued to reside in Nuremberg. After his father's death in 1502 his responsibilities increased, for now in addition to his own family Albert had to look after his mother and his younger brother Hans.

When commissions for portraits and altar-pieces were not forthcoming, Durer's wife used to hawk at fairs and gatherings her husband's prints illustrating episodes in the life of the Holy Family, and these wood and copper engravings not only brought in ready money by satisfying a popular demand, but they were the foundation of the artist's reputation as an engraver. The success of these separate prints was immediate, and soon after the publication of the Apocalypse prints, Durer set to work on other sets of engravings, one of which was to illustrate the Passion of Our Lord and another the Life of the Virgin.

At the instigation and by the kindness of his friend Wilibald Pirkheimer, who lent him the money for the journey, Durer in 1506 paid a visit to Venice, where he was commissioned by the German Merchants to paint a panel for their Chapel. At first the painters of Venice were inclined to regard Albert Durer as a mere engraver who did not understand how to use colour, but the completion of this panel soon silenced hostile criticism and the work proved to be a veritable triumph for the painter.

Bellini's Generosity

In a letter to his friend Pirkheimer, Durer relates how the Doge and the Patriarch of Venice came to see his picture, and still more interesting is his account how the veteran Venetian painter Giovanni Bellini praised the picture in public and further proved his admiration for the work of the Northern painter. Bellini, Durer wrote, "wanted to have something of mine, and himself came and asked me to paint him something

Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"KING HENRY VIII," BY HANS HOLBEIN

No previous period in English history lives so vividly in our imagination as the reign of Henry VIII, and it is due to the powers of Holbein that we are so familiar with the costumes and personalities of the time. This life-like head, together with the elaborate costume, brilliantly displays the fine draughtsmanship of the artist.

and he would pay well for it. All men tell me what an upright man he is, so that I am really friendly with him. He is very old, but is still the best painter of them all." It was at this time that the incident about the paint-brush already narrated occurred.

Altogether this visit to Venice was a success. It definitely established Durer's reputation as a painter, his small panels sold well, and later he went to Bologna, where he received a great ovation, but even the flattery of a Bolognese who declared he could "die happy" now he had seen Durer did not turn the artist's head, and he returned to Nuremberg the same modest, conscientious artist he had always been.

The succeeding years were very fertile in paintings, his principal productions being the "Crucifixion," now at Dresden, the "Adam" and "Eve," in which he tried to give his ideal of beauty of form, and the important altar-piece which he painted for the Frankfort merchant Jacob Heiler. But the artist still found that painting did not bring him in so much profit as engraving, and after he had completed his great "Adoration of the Trinity" in 1511 he gave most of his time to engraving, continuing the first "Passion" series and the "Life of the Virgin." It was after the death of his mother in 1514 that he produced his famous print "Melancholia," a composition full of curious symbolism in which a seated female figure is shown brooding on the tragedies of existence.

"The Great Fortune"

Equally famous and still more difficult wholly to understand is the copper engraving known as "The Great Fortune" or "Nemesis" (see opposite page 95). It is supposed that this engraving was suggested by a passage in Poliziano's Latin poem, which may be thus translated:

> There is a goddess who, aloft in the empty air, advances girdled about with a cloud. . . . She it is who

> crushes extravagant hopes, who threatens the proud, to whom is given to beat down the haughty spirit and the haughty step, and to confound overgreat possessions. Her the men of old called Nemesis. . . . In her hand she bears bridles and a chalice, and smiles for ever with an awful smile, and stands resisting mad designs.

No work has roused more controversy than this design; some have regarded it as a splendid rendering of the physical attributes of mature womanhood, but others have pronounced the ugliness of the figure to be "perfectly repulsive," while others again have found it hard to reconcile the extreme realism of the woman's form with the fanciful imagination shown in her environment.

But however many opinions there may be as to the success of this engraving as an *illustration,* there is only one view about its merits as a *decoration.* Mr. T. Sturge Moore, himself an expert and gifted engraver, has well emphasised this point by reminding the readers of his book on Durer "that it is an engraving and not a woman that we are discussing: and that this engraving is extremely beautiful in arabesque and black and white pattern, rich, rhythmical, and harmonious." If the experiment be made of turning the print upside down, so that attention is no longer concentrated on its meaning as an illustration, its extraordinary ingenuity and interest *as a pattern* will at once become apparent.

In 1518 Durer again resumed his activity as a painter: in that year he was summoned by the Emperor Maximilian to Augsburg, where he was employed in painting portraits of the emperor and of many of his nobles. In 1521 he visited the Netherlands and received much attention in Brussels and Antwerp; though he drew and painted several portraits during his travels, he took up engraving again when he returned to Nuremberg. The series he then began is known as the "Second Passion": this set he did not live to complete. He died in 1528.

Photo: Braun.

"JACOB MEYER," BY HOLBEIN (1497 1543)

Basle.

Holbein's superlative merit as a draughtsman is seen in this early portrait study of one of his first patrons, the Burgomaster of Basle. Note the union of delicacy and strength in the drawing of this head. As a master of line Holbein in his own style has never been surpassed.

Photo: Braun.

"PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG WOMAN," BY HOLBEIN

Windsor Castle.

The Holbein drawings at Windsor are famous both in art and history, and it is largely through them that we are able to visualise so clearly the appearance and character of Henry VIII and his circle. This young woman was possibly one of Jane Seymour's maids-of-honour.

Two years earlier he painted his celebrated "Four Apostles," which have a peculiar interest not only as Durer's last effort in picture-making, but also as an indication of the artist's attitude towards the Reformation.

It was in 1517 that Martin Luther sounded the tocsin for the Reformation by nailing his ninety-five theses on the nature of papal indulgences to the great door of the Church of Wittenberg. It was in the following year that Durer received kindness and attention from his imperial patron, the Catholic prince Maximilian I. The artist was in a difficult position, but though he took no definite side in the great controversy which ensued, his sympathy with the Reformers is shown in this picture by the fact that each of the four Apostles is holding and studying a Bible. It is significant to note that this painting was not a commission, but was painted by Durer to please himself and for presentation to the city of his birth. Here is the letter which accompanied the gift to the Council of Nuremberg:

> Prudent, honourable, wise, dear Masters, I have been intending, for a long time past, to show my respect for your Wisdoms by the presentation of some humble picture of mine as a remembrance but I have been prevented from so doing by the imperfection and insignificance of my works, for I felt that with such I could not stand well before your Wisdoms. Now, however, that I have just painted a panel upon which I have bestowed more trouble than on any other painting, I considered none more worthy to keep it as a remembrance than your Wisdoms.
>
> Therefore, I present it to your Wisdoms with the humble and urgent prayer that you will favourably and graciously receive it, and will be and continue, as I have ever found you, my kind and dear Masters.
>
> Thus shall I be diligent to serve your Wisdoms in all humility.

Possibly it was a remembrance of this picture in particular which prompted Luther, in his consolatory letter to the artist's

friend Pirkheimer, to pen this memorable epitaph on Albert Durer:

> It is well for a pious man to mourn the best of men, but you should call him happy, for Christ illuminated him and called him away in a good hour from the tempests and, possibly, yet more stormy times: so that he, who was worthy only to see the best, might not be compelled to see the worst.

§ 2

After Durer's death many carried on the tradition he had bequeathed to his country as an engraver—the prints of Aldegraver, Beham, and other followers are still treasured by collectors—but none of them won great fame in painting. Matthew Grunewald, Durer's contemporary, had a pupil Lucas Cranach (1472-1553), who was much esteemed by his fellow-citizens of Wittenberg and was appointed Court Painter to the Protestant prince Frederick of Saxony; but we have only to look at the doll-faced "Portrait of a Young Lady" by him in the National Gallery to see how far Cranach's art fell below that of Durer.

The Years of Wonder

Only one other painter of German origin beside Durer has so far succeeded in capturing the world's attention, namely Hans Holbein the Younger, who when Durer died in 1528 was a young man of thirty-one painting in England. No more than twenty-six years separate the birth of Holbein from that of Durer, yet within the space of that one generation so great had been the revolution in men's minds that the two artists seem to belong to different ages. Holbein grew up during the greatest Wonder-Time in the world's history. We who have benefited by and taken for granted the astounding discoveries made during what is known as the Epoch of Maximilian (1493-1519),

Photo: Bruckmann.

"PORTRAIT OF GEORGE GISZE," BY HOLBEIN

Berlin.

There is no more popular element in any picture than the minute rendering of details which betokens a painter's industry and capacity.

This splendidly ornate portrait, in which the accessories are rendered with scrupulous care and brilliance, was a deliberate "show-piece" painted by the artist when he desired to obtain the patronage of "The Merchants of the Steelyard," the title of a Corporation of wealthy German merchants who settled and traded in London during the reign of Henry VIII.

Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"ROBERT CHESEMAN, THE KING'S FALCONER," BY HOLBEIN

The Hague.

By this simple and dignified portrait, both life-like and decorative, of the King's Falconer, Holbein paved the way for his restoration to Court favour, after the execution of his first English patron, Sir Thomas More.

which approximates to the opening of the reign of our Henry VIII, find it difficult to realise the crash of old ideas and the bombardment of new ones which filled the world during this epoch:

> That time [as Lord Bryce has told us]—a time of change and movement in every part of human life, a time when printing had become common, and books were no longer confined to the clergy, when drilled troops were replacing the feudal militia, when the use of gunpowder was changing the face of war—was especially marked by one event to which the history of the world offers no parallel before or since, the discovery of America. . . . The feeling of mysterious awe with which men had regarded the firm plain of the earth and her encircling ocean ever since the days of Homer vanished when astronomers and geographers taught them that she was an insignificant globe which, so far from being the centre of the universe, was itself swept round in the motion of one of the least of its countless systems.

Nothing but an appreciation of these historical facts can teach us rightly to comprehend the essential difference between the art of the two great German masters: for as the "feeling of mysterious awe" with which all his work, whether painted or engraved, is impregnated, makes Albert Durer the last and supreme expression of mediævalism, so an inner consciousness of man's insignificance and a frank recognition of material facts makes Holbein the first exponent in art of Modern Science.

Holbein

The great Hans Holbein was the son of an artist of the same name, Hans Holbein the Elder, a poor and struggling painter of religious pictures in the flourishing city of Augsburg. Here Hans Holbein the Younger was born in 1497. There was never any doubt as to his calling, for he belonged to a family

of painters. Not only his father, but his uncle and his brother were painters also. His father, who was chiefly influenced by the Flemish painter Roger van der Weyden (see Chapter II), had little to teach the son, and when he was seventeen or eighteen young Hans left his father's house in company with his elder brother Ambrosius, and began a foreign tour which eventually ended at Basle. Owing to the lack of any exact records and the constant confusion of the two Holbeins, father and son, the details of Holbein's early life are still a matter of conjecture and controversy. Some hold that the elder Holbein with his family moved from Augsburg to Lucerne about 1514, but the one thing certain is that young Holbein was at Basle in 1515, where he at once found work as a designer with the printer and publisher Frobenius. Through Frobenius he came to know Erasmus, who had recently left France and now graced Basle with his universal fame as a scholar; and soon the young artist found plenty of employment both as a book-illustrator and portraitist. One of the earliest and most loyal of his patrons was the Basle merchant Jacob Meyer, whose portrait and especially the splendid sketch for the same (see opposite page 98) foreshadowed the future greatness of the artist as a portrait painter. About 1516 or 1517 Holbein the Younger was in Lucerne, where he decorated a house, and it is conjectured that about this time he also travelled in Italy; but there is no sure proof, and we can only guess at his movements till he reappears at Basle in 1519. Though but twenty-two, he is now a man and a master. In 1520 he became a citizen of Basle—a necessity if he wished to practise painting in that city—and about the same time he married a widow with two children.

He was a master, but a master of another order to Durer. Holbein was a pure professional painter, anxious to do a day's work and do it as well as he possibly could, but he did not attempt to show how life should be lived or to penetrate its mysteries: he was content to paint what he saw, paint it truly and

splendidly, but like the wise child of a sophisticated age he refrained from a futile endeavour to dig beneath the surface. Holbein can show you the character of a man, as in his portrait of Jacob Meyer; but Durer would have tried to read his soul.

In 1521 he painted his masterly, though to many unattractive, picture, "The Dead Man," horribly realistic some would say, yet in truth it is not morbid. For this outstretched corpse is painted with the calm detachment of a student of anatomy; it is a manifestation of the sceptical, inquiring, but unmoved gaze of Science confronted with a Fact. In 1522 he painted "Two Saints" and a "Madonna," in the following year a "Portrait of Erasmus," in 1526 a "Venus" and a gay lady styled "Lais Corinthiaca," and in 1529 he painted a great "Madonna" for his friend Jacob Meyer.

The careful reader will have observed that no paintings are given above for the years 1523 to 1525, and indeed these were bad years for all painters. When Giulio de' Medici was elected Pope as Clement VII in 1523, he found, as a historian has said, "the world in confusion, a great movement going on in Germany, a great war just begun between the three most powerful Christian monarchs—a war to which he himself was pledged." Thinking the French would win, he sided with them. Two months after he had signed the treaty of alliance, Francis I of France was defeated and taken prisoner at Pavia, and the Emperor's troops—thousands of Protestants among them—headed for Rome. All the diplomatic wiles of the Pontiff were unavailing, and in May, 1527, a horrified world beheld Christian troops, Germans, Spaniards, and Italians, engaged in the Sack of Rome.

Basle, then a city of the Empire, though not exposed to the full force of the currents of war, was not untouched by these events, and Holbein, like a shrewd man of the world, began to look out for a shelter from the storm that was convulsing Europe. His native Germany was out of the question, for

there paintings already in existence were being destroyed by zealots desirous of "purifying" Protestant churches. During this time of waiting, when commissions for pictures were scarce, Holbein began that series of wood-engravings which have done as much as any of his paintings to make his name illustrious.

"The Dance of Death"

No works of Holbein have held a more lasting place in the popular imagination than his little woodcuts illustrating "The Dance of Death." As remote in its origin as the "morality" play, this picturing of the fact that all living beings must die was probably in its beginning a monkish device to compel those who could not read to realise their inevitable fate. This lesson was driven home by the universality with which the theme was expounded. In the older prints of this subject the highest and lowest in the land were shown each dancing with a dead partner of the same rank and calling, a king dancing with a dead king, a bishop dancing with a dead bishop, a merchant with a dead merchant, a labourer with a dead labourer. Whoever you were you could not escape death, that was always dancing at your heels. This was the age-old theme to which Holbein gave new life, and if his version of the Dance of Death has eclipsed all other versions it is because Holbein was the first to present Death as an abstraction, common to all prints in the series, and because no other treatment of the theme has excelled his in the pictorial elements of design. Each of these prints is itself a perfect little picture—see how beautiful is the landscape with the setting sun in "The Husbandman" (facing page 94). As for its value as preaching, Holbein's series serves a double purpose, emphasising by the skeleton that accompanies all alike, Pope, Cardinal, Miser, Husbandman, and what not, the equality as well as the universality of death. Holbein's message is not only that "all flesh is grass"; but also that under their skin "the colonel's lady and Judith O'Grady" are very much alike.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE AMBASSADORS," BY HOLBEIN

National Gallery, London.

This famous picture of the Ambassadors Jean de Dinteville and the Bishop of Lavaur is another of Holbein's show-pieces, designed to maintain his Continental reputation and to attract the custom of foreign diplomats. The curiously distorted representation of a human skull in the foreground is an important element in the quadrilateral design and also a rebus on the name of the artist, "Holbein" meaning "skull."

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

THE "DUCHESS OF MILAN," BY HOLBEIN

National Gallery, London.

The grace and sweetness of meditative maidenhood is revealed with matchless beauty in this painting, which is a portrait of a Princess of Denmark who at the age of eleven had married Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, and at fifteen, when this portrait was painted, was already a widow.

In 1526 Holbein found the haven for which he had been looking in England, an isle remote from the European storm-centre. It is probable that he had become known through Erasmus to Sir Thomas More and so was invited to come: his painting of "The Household of Sir Thomas More" was one of the earliest and most important paintings executed by Holbein during his first stay in England. In 1528 he returned to Basle for three years, and having dispatched thence his gorgeous portrait of "George Gisze, Merchant of the Steelyard" (facing page 100) to show what he *could* do in portraiture, he returned to England in 1531.

This handsome and exceedingly ornate portrait of a young merchant in his counting-house was a deliberate show-piece which had exactly the effect the painter intended. In troublous and uncertain times princes and great nobles were unreliable patrons; at any moment they might be dethroned, killed, or executed. Like a prudent man Holbein wished to establish a connection with a steadier, yet equally rich stratum of society, namely the great merchants. Therefore he cleverly set his cap at the wealthy German merchants settled in London, and showed them in this portrait that he could make a merchant look as splendid and imposing as any king or nobleman. He delivered his sample, and human vanity did the rest. The German "Merchants of the Steelyard," as this Corporation was styled, flocked to his studio in London. Three years later his first English patron, Sir Thomas More, was sent to the scaffold by Henry VIII because he declined to declare the nullity of that royal reprobate's first marriage with Catherine of Aragon.

Court Painter

To have been the friend of More was at this time no commendation to the favour of the Court; nevertheless, Holbein was not the man to miss any opportunity of "getting on" for want of a little tact and diplomacy. Firmly based on the support of

the German merchants, he tried another method of approach. Very soon we find him painting his splendid portrait of "Robert Cheseman, the King's Falconer" (facing page 101), painting first the minor and then the greater courtiers, till at last, in 1536, he achieved what no doubt had been his aim from the first, and was appointed Court Painter to King Henry VIII.

Never did that sovereign do a wiser or a better thing for himself than when he made Holbein his painter. Not only did the artist present that king to posterity in a manner that mitigates our judgment of his cruelties, but has made the whole history of that period live for us, as no previous period in English history lives, by his series of portraits and portrait drawings of the English Court. Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer has pointedly observed:

> How comparatively cold we are left by the name, say of Edward III, a great king surrounded by great men in a stirring period. No visual image comes to the mind's eye: at most we see, imaginatively, coins and the seals that depend from charters.

Mr. Hueffer truly argues that Henry VIII and his men would be just as lifeless without Holbein, and the way he has made them live in our imagination is a tribute not only to Holbein but also to the preserving power of art.

While preparing the way for his advancement in England, Holbein did not neglect the connection he already had on the Continent, and three years before his appointment as Court Painter he sought to widen and enhance his foreign custom by painting another show-piece: "The Ambassadors" (facing page 104) was painted as deliberately to force an entry into diplomatic circles as the "George Gisze" had been to secure him the custom of the men of commerce. This remarkable group of Jean de Dinteville, Lord Polisy, on the left, wearing the French Order of S. Michel, and of Georges de Selve, Bishop of Lavaur,

in doctor's cap and gown, on the right, fascinates all beholders by the brilliance with which the accessories are painted, the globe, the turkey rug, the tiling, the mandoline, the astronomical instruments, and in the foreground the anamorphosis (or distorted representation) of a human skull. Many keen imaginations have set their wits to work to find an inner meaning to this curiously elongated death's-head but the most plausible explanation is found in the fact that Holbein's own name means "skull" in his native language, and this device may consequently be regarded as a fanciful way of putting his seal or cipher on his work. Another interpretation is that here, as in other portraits by Holbein, the skull is introduced to reinforce the lesson of the "Dance of Death," that to this all must come. Whatever the painter's original idea may have been, his work is a complete success; he painted it to create a sensation, and it has created a sensation for centuries. It may be added that this elongated skull completes the design, by paralleling the line from the one ambassador's hand (holding the dagger) to the head of the other ambassador.

After the death of Jane Seymour, when Europe was searched for marriageable princesses to console the royal widower, Holbein in February, 1538, was sent to Brussels to paint his matchless portrait of King Christian's daughter, "Christina of Denmark" (illustration facing page 105), who, fortunately for herself, escaped Henry VIII and afterwards married the Duke of Lorraine as her second husband. One of Holbein's last works, this is by many accounted his greatest. Here he has painted no show-piece, but set forth with divine simplicity the grace and dignity of meditative girlhood.

From Brussels Holbein went to Burgundy, where he painted other portraits, and in December of the same year he returned to London. Almost exactly five years later he caught the plague. In November, 1543, Holbein died in London, a victim of the same disease that had already killed Giorgione in his youth and was

destined, thirty-three years later, to carry off Titian in his old age.

Just as Durer and Holbein had no great forerunners, so they had no great successors, and Europe had to wait thirty-four years before another great master of art was born, outside Italy, in the person of Peter Paul Rubens.

VII

THE PRIDE OF FLANDERS

THE PRIDE OF FLANDERS

THE ART OF RUBENS, VAN DYCK, AND THE FLEMISH PORTRAIT-PAINTERS

§ 1

PAINTER, courier, scholar, and diplomatist, Peter Paul Rubens is one of the most picturesque figures in European history. In origin he belonged to the upper middle class, for though his grandfather had been a tanner of Antwerp, his father John Rubens (1530-87) had taken his degree at an Italian university and subsequently attained considerable civic importance in Antwerp. At that time Flanders was under Spanish rule, and trouble with the authorities over political and religious matters drove the Protestant John Rubens and his family into exile at Cologne. There he became the intimate counsellor of William the Silent, and, unfortunately, too intimate with his patron's wife, the Princess of Orange. Their love affair was discovered and Dr. John Rubens was thrown into prison, from which he was only released after the Prince had divorced his wife. He did not long survive his imprisonment, and died at Cologne in 1587.

All this had its influence on young Peter Paul, who was born at Siegen, Westphalia, in 1577, one year after the death of Titian. Political complications had already driven his father from Antwerp, and so the boy spent his early childhood in exile. He was only ten years old when his father died, and then his

mother returned to Antwerp taking her three children with her, Blandina the eldest, a young woman of twenty-three, Philippe a boy of thirteen, and Peter Paul the youngest. By a curious coincidence, just as only one year separated the birth of Peter Paul Rubens from the death of Titian, so again one year divided the death of John Rubens from that of Paul Veronese (1588), whose art his son was destined to develop and glorify.

After her daughter's marriage in 1590, the widow Rubens was able to say in a letter that both her sons were earning their living—so we know that their schooldays in Antwerp were short: Philippe obtained a place in the office of a town councillor of Brussels, while Peter Paul was Page of Honour to the Princess Margaret de Ligne-Aremberg. This gave the future diplomatist his first experience of court life; but it was a short one, for already he felt art to be his true vocation, and in 1591 the lad of fourteen was allowed to begin his training as a painter in the studio of his cousin Tobias Verhaeght.

Here it may be well to recall that since the death of Mabuse in 1533 there had been no painter of the first rank in Flanders. Lucas da Heere (1534-84), a capable portrait-painter, though born at Ghent worked chiefly in France and England. Returning to Flanders he could get little employment, and he died in poverty at Paris. A more successful portrait-painter, Antonio Moro (1519-78), better known as Sir Anthony More, also began his career in Ghent, but found more appreciation of his art in England and Spain. The most important of the immediate predecessors of Rubens were two families of artists, the Pourbus and the Breughels. Peter Pourbus (1510-84), a Bruges painter of portraits and religious subjects, had a son Frans Pourbus (1545-81), who settled in Antwerp. He in turn had a still more famous son, Frans Pourbus the Younger (1570-1622), who painted portraits not only in Antwerp but also at the Court of Henri IV in Paris. Young Pourbus, seven years older than Rubens, was one of the few of his con-

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"LE CHAPEAU DE POIL," BY RUBENS

National Gallery, London.

This smiling lady in the beaver hat (chapeau de poil) is Susanne Fourment, whose sister Helene became the second wife of the artist. Of the many portraits of women painted by Rubens this is the most famous, and it is a splendid example of his powers at their prime.

temporaries in Antwerp who not only never worked for Rubens but may have had some influence on his early style.

The founder of the Breughel family was Peter Breughel (*c.* 1525-69), whose dramatic "Adoration of the Magi" was secured for the National Gallery in 1921. Another interesting example of his forcible but primitive style, "Sacking a Village," is at Hampton Court. This painter had two sons, Peter, known as "Hell" Breughel[1] (1564–1638), because of his choice of subjects, and a younger, Jan, nicknamed "Velvet" Breughel (1568–1625), on account of the softness of his painting. The father made Brussels his headquarters, but the sons settled in Antwerp, where, notwithstanding his seniority, Jan Breughel eventually became an assistant to Rubens.

Rubens in Venice

Reubens remained little more than six months with his cousin, who was a landscape artist. His next teacher, Adam van Noort, was a figure-painter, but it is unlikely he learnt much from this morose and often drunken boor. In 1596 he found a more congenial master in Otto Vaenius (1558–1629), who was a gentleman, a scholar, and a man of the world, though as a painter he was even duller and stiffer than his own master, the Venetian Zucchero (*c.* 1543–1616), well known in England by his numerous portraits of Queen Elizabeth. One thing that Vaenius did was to fire his pupil with enthusiasm for Italian art, and two years after he had come of age and had been admitted a member of the Guild of St. Luke, Peter Paul Rubens arrived in Venice. Here the admirable copies he made of paintings by Titian and Veronese attracted the attention of Vincenzo I, Duke of Mantua, into whose service Rubens almost immediately entered. With the Duke he was at Florence for the marriage of Marie de' Medici to Henri IV (by proxy), and in 1603—after he had visited Rome, Padua, and other Italian cities—Rubens

[1] A characteristic example of "Hell" Breughel's work, "An Incantation Scene," may be seen in the Dyce Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.

was sent by Vincenzo I on a mission with presents of horses and pictures to Philip III of Spain.

Though not then entrusted with any work for the Spanish monarch, Rubens painted several pictures for his prime minister the Duke of Lerma before he returned to Italy. After working for his patron at Mantua, Rome, and Genoa, Rubens in 1608 was recalled to Antwerp by news of his mother's serious illness. Too late to see her alive when he reached his native city, the grief-stricken painter remained for several months in strict seclusion, whence he was drawn by the rulers of Flanders, the Stadtholders Albert and Isabella, who, conscious of his growing reputation, persuaded Rubens to leave the Mantuan service and become their Court Painter. In accepting this position Rubens was permitted to live at Antwerp instead of with the Court at Brussels.

His brother Philippe had already married the daughter of his chief, the Secretary of Antwerp, and it was probably at their house that Rubens saw his sister-in-law's niece Isabella, daughter of John Brant, whom he married in 1609. The following year the artist designed a palatial residence in the Italian style, and had it built on the thoroughfare now known as the *Rue de Rubens:* there he took his young and beautiful wife, and there he settled down to found the School of Antwerp. The ensuing ten or twelve years were the most tranquil and probably the happiest in the life of Rubens. An example of Rubens' first manner is the portrait (facing page 114) of "The Artist and his First Wife," painted when he was about thirty-two and his newly married wife Isabella Brant little over eighteen. During this period he executed the works on which his fame most securely rests, notably his supreme masterpiece, "The Descent from the Cross" (facing page 116), in Antwerp Cathedral. This work, executed in 1612, marks the beginning of Rubens' second manner just as his "Elevation of the Cross," also in Antwerp and painted in 1609–10, concludes his first or Italian manner.

Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"RUBENS AND HIS FIRST WIFE," BY RUBENS (1577–1640)

Pinakothek, Munich.

This portrait group of Rubens with his first wife Isabella Brant is a fine example of his early style of portraiture. Note the precision of drawing and wealth of detail which formed the foundation for the artist's later and more dashing style.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE RAINBOW LANDSCAPE," BY RUBENS

Wallace Collection, London.

This picture shows Rubens' attitude towards nature, which he approached without awe and with the friendly arrogance of a strong man who respects strength.

The late R. A. M. Stevenson, a most penetrating critic, has pointed out how much more original and softer is the later picture:

> It started the Antwerp School, and beyond its ideal scarce any contemporary advanced. The forms are less muscular, the gestures less exaggerated, the transitions suaver, the light and shade less contrasted than in the first period, but the pigment is still solid, and the colours are treated as large, unfused blocks of decorative effect.

The Antwerp Picture-Factory

The growth of Rubens was gradual, but the extraordinary number of his collaborators makes the tracing of that growth a task of infinite difficulty. Apart from other contemporary evidence, the letters of Rubens himself show the number of artists he employed to work from his designs. The truth is he established a picture-factory at Antwerp, and not only engaged assistants to help him carry out gigantic decorations for churches and palaces, but also farmed out commissions for easel-pictures, landscapes, and portraits. In addition to "Velvet" Breughel, his collaborators and pupils at one time or another included Snyders (1579–1657), Jordaens (1593–1678), Cornelius de Vos (1585–1651), Antony Van Dyck (1599–1641), David Teniers (1610–90), Jan Fyt (1609–61), and a score of others. A good example of the "team-work" accomplished in the Rubens studio is our illustration "Christ in the House of Martha and Mary" (facing page 120). In this picture, now in the Irish National Gallery at Dublin, the figures are by Rubens, the landscape by "Velvet" Breughel, the architecture by Van Delen, and the accessories by Jan van Kessel. Yet all is so controlled by the master-hand that to any but an expert the whole appears to be the work of one man.

A story is told that the Dean of Malines Cathedral was furious when, having ordered a "Last Supper" from Rubens, a

young man named Justus van Egmont came down to begin the work. Later on

> the great man appeared with his fine presence and the urbane manner that was a bulwark against offence or misappreciation. As Rubens corrected the work, enlivened the colour or the action of the figures, and swept the whole composition with his unerring brushwork towards a beautiful unity of effect, the churchman acknowledged the wisdom of the master, and admitted that the money of the chapter had been safely invested.

Even the beautiful portrait of "Susanne Fourment" (see Colour-Plate), known as "Le Chapeau de Poil," a canvas of 1620, which shows Rubens' second manner merging into his third—in which the pigment is less solid and the fusion of colour more subtle—even this work has been thought by some critics to be not altogether the work of Rubens. The late R. A. M. Stevenson considered that "the comparatively rude folds of the dress and the trivial details of the feather" betrayed another hand at work.

The fame of the Flemish master had spread all over Europe, and in January, 1622, Rubens was summoned to Paris by the Queen-Mother, Marie de' Medici, who wished him to decorate her favourite Luxembourg Palace. The great series of wall-paintings, which were the result of this commission, are now one of the glories of the Louvre. These pictures were designed to emphasise the greatness of the Medicis and the splendour resulting from the marriage of Marie de' Medici to King Henri IV of France. How cleverly Rubens fulfilled his double rôle of courtier and decorator, may be seen by our illustration (facing page 118) of one of the most notable pictures in this series, "Henri IV Receiving the Portrait of Marie de' Medici." Here, in a wonderful blending of fable with reality, the artist idealises the King as monarch and lover, and turns a marriage dictated by

Photo: Braun.

"THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS," BY RUBENS

Antwerp Cathedral.

Though temperamentally unfitted to be a religious painter, Rubens, by his splendid colour, flowing design, and naturalness of presentation, gives so fine a rendering of this awesome subject that it is counted to be his supreme masterpiece.

Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"THE BLESSINGS OF PEACE," BY RUBENS

National Gallery, London.

When visiting England as Ambassador for Philip IV, Rubens presented this picture to Charles I as a hint of the advantages to be derived if England made peace with Spain. It shows the Goddess of Wisdom pushing back War, while Peace receives Wealth and Happiness and their smiling offspring.

reasons of State into a romantic love-match in which Cupid and all the deities of Olympus are deeply concerned.

Endowed by nature with a splendid presence, tactful in disposition and charming in manners, Rubens was a man to win the confidence of any Court. After the death of the Archduke Albert in 1621, his widow the Regent Isabella took Rubens into her inner counsels and employed him in semi-official visits to foreign courts. The great object of the rulers of Flanders was to keep England and Holland friendly with Spain and apart from France. One of the first missions which Rubens received was to secure a renewal of the treaty between Holland and Flanders, a task which took him to The Hague in 1623. It was at this time that he was ennobled by the King of Spain.

When visiting Paris the painter had made the acquaintance of the Duke of Buckingham, the virtual ruler of England under Charles I, and this nobleman had been greatly taken by the talents of the Fleming both as artist and diplomatist. It was Buckingham himself who suggested that Rubens should be sent to Spain in the summer of 1628 to ascertain the real feelings of Philip IV in the war which Buckingham planned against France through hatred of Richelieu, who had separated him from Anne of Austria. Rubens arrived at Madrid in the course of the summer, bringing with him eight pictures as a present to Philip; but the assassination of Buckingham on September 2nd, 1628, changed the political aspect of affairs and enabled Rubens to give his whole attention to art. An important event in the history of painting was the meeting in Spain of Rubens, now fifty-two, with Velazquez, then a man of thirty; the two became great friends and we shall see, in the chapter on Spanish painting, that the younger man was considerably influenced by his elder.

The Artist-Ambassador

Politically the great result of the Fleming's stay in Spain was that Philip IV consented to Rubens going as his official re-

presentative to King Charles I of England. The artist-diplomat arrived in London on May 25, 1629, and not only arranged the terms of peace between England and Spain but gave a new direction to English painting. Charles commissioned him to paint the ceiling which may still be seen in the Banqueting Saloon in Whitehall, now the United Services Museum, and many of his pictures were bought by the Royal Family and nobility of England.

The tact of the courtier, as well as the splendid powers of the painter, may be seen in our illustration (facing page 117) of a famous Rubens at the National Gallery, "The Blessings of Peace," which shows Minerva, goddess of Wisdom, pushing back War, while Peace receives Wealth and Happiness and their smiling children. This picture was presented to the English king by Rubens soon after his arrival in London as a delicate hint of the advantages to be derived from concluding peace with Spain.

It is said that while he was painting this picture in London an English courtier asked Rubens, "Does the Ambassador of his Catholic Majesty amuse himself with painting?" "No," replied Rubens, "I amuse myself sometimes with being an ambassador."

On February 21, 1630, Charles I knighted the painter, and soon afterwards Sir Peter Paul Rubens returned to the Continent and again settled in Antwerp. Isabella Brant had been dead about four years, and in December Rubens married Helen Fourment, whom he must have known from childhood. She was one of the seven daughters of Daniel Fourment, a widower who had married the sister of Rubens's first wife. Helen was only sixteen when she married.

The last seven years of his life were devoted by Rubens to domestic happiness and his art rather than to politics, which he practically abandoned after 1633. He had a fine country estate near Malines, the Château de Steen, of which we may see a picture in the National Gallery, and there for the most part he

Photo: Alinari.

"HENRI IV RECEIVING PORTRAIT OF MARIE DE' MEDICI," BY RUBENS

The Louvre, Paris.

In this splendid decoration Rubens idealises a marriage made for reasons of state, and presents it as a romantic love-match in which Cupid and all the deities of Olympus are deeply concerned.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"CORNELIUS VAN DER GEEST," BY VAN DYCK (1599–1641)

National Gallery, London.

How Van Dyck penetrated below externals to the mind and spirit of his sitter may be seen in this wonderful rendering of a man's thought and character.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"CHARLES I," BY VAN DYCK

National Gallery, London.

Nobody can withhold sympathy from this knightly figure, in which the artist portrays all the virtues of the royal martyr and none of his faults. After the execution of Charles I this picture was sold by the Puritans and passed into the possession of the Elector of Bavaria, from whom it was purchased and brought back to England by the great Duke of Marlborough.

"THE RICHES OF AUTUMN," BY JORDAENS (1593–1678)

Wallace Collection, London.

This bacchanalian scene is a typical specimen of the exuberant art of Jordaens. The fruit and vegetables are painted by Snyders.

lived quietly, happy with his girl-wife and only troubled by attacks of gout. During these last years Rubens produced a quantity of fine pictures; in one year (1638), for example, he despatched a cargo of 112 pictures by himself and his pupils to the King of Spain. The rapidity of the master's execution is well illustrated by a story that, having received a repeat order from Philip (*after* he had received the 112 pictures!), and being pressed by the monarch's brother Ferdinand to deliver the new pictures as quickly as possible, Rubens said he would do them all with his own hand "to gain time"!

Among these new pictures, sent off in February 1639, were "The Judgment of Paris" and "The Three Graces," both now at the Prado and generally held to be the finest as well as the latest of the painter's many pictures of these subjects. But still the King of Spain wanted more pictures by Rubens. Further commissions arrived, and in May 1640 the great master died in harness, working almost to the last on four large canvases.

Excelling in every branch of painting, and prolific in production, Rubens is a master of whose art only a brief summary can be given. A final word, however, must be said on the landscapes which form a conspicuous feature among his later works, and of which we possess so splendid an example in "The Rainbow Landscape" (facing page 115) in the Wallace Collection. The healthy and contented sense of physical well-being, which radiates from every landscape by Rubens, has been well expressed in a criticism of this picture by Dr. Richard Muther: "The struggle of the elements is past, everything glitters with moisture, and the trees rejoice like fat children who have just had their breakfast."

It has been said that there are landscapes which soothe and calm our spirits, and landscapes which exhilarate. Those by Rubens come under the latter category. He was no mystic in his attitude towards Nature; he approached her without awe, with the friendly arrogance of a strong man who respects

strength. Most of his landscapes were painted in the neighbourhood of his country seat, and in them we may trace not only the painter's love of the beauty in Nature, but something also of the landowner's pride in a handsome and well-ordered estate.

The heir of the great Venetians in his painted decorations, Rubens was a pioneer in all other directions. His portraits were the inspiration of Van Dyck and the English painters of the eighteenth century, his landscapes were the prelude to Hobbema and the "natural painters" of England and Holland; while in pictures like "Le Jardin d'Amour" and "The Dance of Villagers" he invented a new style of pastoral with small figures which Watteau and other later artists delightfully exploited.

§ 2

Of all the many followers of Rubens, the two most famous were Van Dyck and Jacob Jordaens (1593-1678), another exuberant Fleming, who though greatly influenced by Rubens was never actually his pupil. The "Riches of Autumn" (facing page 119) in the Wallace Collection is a fine example of the bacchanalian opulence of Jordaens. The fruit, vegetables, and most of the foliage in this picture are painted by Frans Snyders (1579-1657), a noted painter of "still-life" who frequently collaborated with Rubens and other painters. The skill of Jordaens as a portrait-painter may be seen in his "Baron Waha de Linter of Namur" in the National Gallery, but though a capable and skilful painter of whatever was before him, Jordaens had no imagination and added little of his own to the art of Rubens.

Van Dyck

Anthony Van Dyck, who was born at Antwerp in 1599, was supposed to have entered the studio of Rubens as a boy of thirteen, but recent research has shown he was originally a pupil of Hendrick van Balen and did not enter the studio of Rubens till about 1618. He was the favourite as well as the most famous

Photo: T. & R. Annan & Sons.

"CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF MARTHA AND MARY," BY RUBENS

Irish National Gallery, Dublin.

This picture is an example of the co-operative painting carried on by Rubens when he established his "picture-factory" at Antwerp. The landscape is by Breughel, the architecture by Van Delen, the accessories by Jan van Kessel, and the figures by Rubens, who put the finishing touches which give unity to the whole.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"MARCHESA CATTANEO," BY VAN DYCK
National Gallery, London.

The influence of Titian can be seen in this portrait of a Genoese noblewoman painted during Van Dyck's second visit to Genoa after he had been studying the Venetian painters.

of his master's pupils, and yet temperamentally he was miles apart from Rubens. Where Rubens made all his sitters robust and lusty, Van Dyck made his refined and spiritual. From Rubens he learnt how to use his tools, but as soon as he had mastered them he obtained widely different results. The English Ambassador at The Hague persuaded Van Dyck to visit England in 1620 when he was only just of age, but at that time he made only a short stay, and after his return to Antwerp, Rubens urged him to visit Italy. It was good advice. The dreamy, poetic-looking youth, whose charming painting of himself at this time we may see in the National Portrait Gallery, London, was spiritually nearer akin to the Italian than to the Flemish painters. What he learnt from them, especially from Titian, may be seen in "The Artist as a Shepherd" in the Wallace Collection, painted about 1625-6, and from the still more splendid portraits in the National Gallery of the Marchese and Marchesa Cattaneo (facing page 121) both painted during the artist's second stay in Genoa.

Strengthened and polished by his knowledge of Italian art, Van Dyck returned to Antwerp, there to paint among many other fine things two of his outstanding achievements in portraiture, the paintings of Philippe Le Roy and his wife which now hang in the Wallace Collection. These portraits of the Governor of the Netherlands and his wife were painted in 1630 and 1631, when the artist was little over thirty years of age, and in the following year the young painter was invited by Charles I to visit England, where he became Sir Antony Van Dyck, Principal Painter in Ordinary to His Majesty.

His great equestrian portrait "Charles I on Horseback," which we reproduce (facing page 118), passed through several hands before it found a permanent home in the National Gallery. When King Charles's art collection was sold by the Puritans in 1649, this picture passed into the collection of the Elector of Bavaria. Afterwards it was purchased at Munich by the

great Duke of Marlborough, from whose descendant it was bought in 1885 for the National Gallery, the price given for this and Raphael's "Ansidei Madonna" being £87,500.

After he had established himself in England Van Dyck slightly altered his manner, creating a style of portraiture which was slavishly followed by his successors, Sir Peter Lely and Sir Godfrey Kneller.

To speak of the elegance of Van Dyck's portraits is to repeat a commonplace, but what the casual observer is apt to overlook is that this elegance penetrates below externals to the mind and spirit of the sitter. Of his powers in both directions an exquisite example is the portrait group of "Lords John and Bernard Stuart" (facing page 122), one of the most beautiful pictures he ever painted in England, and a work which proves Van Dyck to have been not only a supremely fluent master of the brush, but also a profound and penetrating psychologist.

Had he lived longer no one can say what other masterpieces he might have achieved; but unfortunately, with all his other great qualities as a painter, Van Dyck lacked the health and strength of his master Rubens. How good-looking he was in his youth, we can see by the charming portrait of himself which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, but this refined, almost girlish face suggests delicacy and weakness. Weak in a way, he was; though not spoiled by success, he could not stand the social whirl and dissipation on which a Rubens could thrive. Very superstitious, he was a victim to quacks and spent much time and money in endeavouring to discover the philosopher's stone. It is said that his failure to find this precious fable of the alchemists preyed on his mind and contributed to his collapse in 1641, when though no more than forty-two his frail body was worn out with gout and excesses. On the death of Rubens in 1640 Van Dyck went over to Antwerp. It was his last journey, and soon after his return to London he joined his great compatriot among the ranks of the illustrious dead.

Photo: Braun.

"LORDS JOHN AND BERNARD STUART," BY VAN DYCK

The most beautiful portrait group Van Dyck painted in England; shows the refinement of the artist's portraiture and his capacity as a psychologist.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"PHILIPPE LE ROY," BY VAN DYCK

Wallace Collection, London.

This portrait of the Governor of the Netherlands was executed in Antwerp when the painter was a little over thirty years of age.

Van Dyck established a style in portraiture which succeeding generations of painters have endeavoured to imitate; but none has surpassed, few have approached him, and when we look among his predecessors we have to go back to Botticelli before we find another poet-painter who with equal, though different, exquisiteness mirrored not merely the bodies but the very souls of humanity.

After Van Dyck's death, numerous imitators, both British and Flemish, endeavoured to copy his style of portraiture, but the next great impetus art was to receive after Rubens came, not from England nor from Flanders, but from Spain. It is to the country of Velazquez and Murillo, therefore, that we must next turn our attention.

VIII

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW IN SPAIN

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW IN SPAIN

THE ART OF EL GRECO, VELAZQUEZ, AND MURILLO

§ 1

WHEN one thinks of Spain and art, the name of Velazquez jumps into the mind at once. Indeed, to most people, his is the only name in Spanish painting of outstanding importance. Looking back over the whole history of art in Spain, Velazquez's figure overshadows that of everyone who went before him and of all who have come after him. In a sense, he is the only great painter Spain has produced. He interpreted the life of his time in terms that appeal universally, and no art has had more influence than his on modern painters.

How Art Came to Spain
Caravaggio

How art came to Spain must now briefly be related. Until the fifteenth century there was little painting in Spain, and then, owing to the political connection of Spain with the Netherlands, the influence was markedly Flemish. It will be remembered that Jan van Eyck (see Chapter II) visited Spain in 1428, and the brilliant reception he received there induced other Flemish artists to visit the peninsula. Later, when Naples and the Sicilies came under the dominion of the Spanish crown, Italian art set the fashion to Spanish painters and particularly, as we might expect, the art of Naples. The Neapolitan School

owed its origin to Michael Angelo Amerigi, called Caravaggio (1569-1609) from his birthplace near Milan. Undaunted by the great achievements of the Italian painters who immediately preceded him, Caravaggio sought to form an independent style of his own based on a bold imitation of nature. While he was working in Venice and Rome, this astute student of nature saw his contemporaries falling into decadence because they were artists imitating art. The seventeenth-century painters of Rome, Florence, and Venice degenerated into mere copyists of Titian, Tintoretto, Raphael, and Michael Angelo. Caravaggio saw their error, and perceiving that art based on art leads to decadence, he gave his whole attention to nature and so became a pioneer of realism. By choice he elected to paint scenes taken from the ordinary life of his day, and "The Card Cheaters" (facing page 130) is an admirable example of the novelty both of his subject and of his treatment. The novelty in his treatment chiefly consisted of the use Caravaggio made of light and shade (technically known as *chiaroscuro*) to enforce the dramatic intensity of his pictures. He exaggerated his shadows, which were far too black to be scrupulously faithful to nature, but by the emphasis he thus gave to his lights he produced original and arresting effects which undoubtedly had a powerful influence on the two greatest painters of the next generation. How widespread was his authority is proved by the extent to which he prepared the way for both Velazquez and Rembrandt.

After working in Milan, Venice, and Rome, Caravaggio settled in Naples, where among those influenced by his realism was the Spanish painter Josef Ribera (1588-1656). "The Dead Christ" in the National Gallery, London, is an example of Ribera's stern naturalism.

El Greco

Through Ribera the influence of Caravaggio penetrated to Spain, but already that country had had its art sense profound-

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"ST. JOHN AND THE LAMB," BY BARTOLOME ESTEBAN MURILLO (1617–1682)

National Gallery, London.

Murillo was inspired by John the Baptist's words, quoted by the Apostle John: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

ly stirred by a foreign artist who not merely visited Spain, as other artists had done, but made it his home. This was Domenico Theotocopuli, who from having been born at Canada, Crete, was universally called El Greco, that is to say "The Greek." El Greco (1545-1614), as we shall call him, went to Venice as a young man of twenty-five and worked there for a time under Titian. About 1575 he migrated to Spain and settled at Toledo, where he became affected by the great religious fervour which was then agitating the peninsula.

Art is the mirror of life, and a great part of the fascination of old pictures is that in them are reflected the great upheavals of history. We have seen how Florentine art was affected by the preaching first of St. Francis of Assisi and afterwards of Savonarola; in Chapter VI it was shown how the Reformation influenced the last painting of Albert Durer and the whole outlook of Holbein. Now the most formidable antagonists that the Lutheran Reformers had to face, alike in action and in thought, were the Spaniards. The movement of the counter-Reformation originated and flourished in Spain. As the Spaniards in the Middle Ages had battled against the Moors till they won their land for Christianity, so they fought against the paganism of the Roman Church during the sixteenth century and strove with equal determination later against the Reformers, whom they regarded as heretics. The herald of this last battle was Ignatius Loyola, and he and his creation, the Order of the Jesuits, proved to be the most dangerous and powerful adversary of Protestantism.

El Greco's picture "Christ Driving the Traders from the Temple," in the National Gallery, may be regarded as symbolising the purification of the Church by Loyola, but it is by his treatment infinitely more than by his choice of subject that El Greco expresses that vein of "convulsed mysticism" which was the peculiar attribute of Spanish Catholicism. El Greco as he grew older seemed to take delight in distorting natural forms.

There is something savage, brutal even, in his art, and his deep earnestness gives grandeur to terrible things. The generally acknowledged masterpiece and most characteristic work by El Greco is his picture (facing page 131) in the church of San Tomé in Toledo, in which the members of a knightly order solemnly attend the funeral of Count Orgaz. The corpse is lowered into the ground by two saints, while Christ, Mary, martyrs, and angels hover in the air, and this "abrupt union of actual with transcendental"—as Dr. Muther puts it—together with the uncanny, slightly exaggerated forms found in parts of the picture confess a touch of hysteria.

By a curious coincidence the tercentenary of El Greco was celebrated in 1914, at a moment when the whole of Europe was again in a turmoil and minds were full of hatred and thoughts of violence. To a generation excited by war and rumours of war the suppressed violence in El Greco's pictures was irresistibly attractive. Some very advanced critics and ultra-progressive painters found in his neurotic temperament their ideal Old Master. El Greco was reputed to have held that colour was of far more importance than form or drawing, and if this belief was once regarded as "a curious anticipation of modern ideas," these "modern ideas" are themselves now out of date, drawing and design being now generally accepted as the foundation of all good art. El Greco's pictures are far from being formless. Historically and psychologically the paintings of El Greco are of the highest interest; but they are a dangerous model for the art student.

Another foreign artist, who if he did not succeed in expressing the spirit of the time nevertheless influenced Spanish painting considerably, was Sir Anthony More, who, as mentioned in Chapter VII, visited Spain, and during his stay there, about 1551-2, set a style of portraiture which served as a model for Coello (1515-90) and other Spanish court-painters.

Photo: Alinari.

"THE CARD CHEATERS," BY CARAVAGGIO (1569–1609)

Dresden.

Life shrewdly seen and truly rendered furnishes the artist with themes as fascinating as any provided by history or legend. This Neapolitan painter, by giving dramatic intensity to scenes taken from the ordinary life of his day, became the founder of naturalism in art, and his pictures are human documents of never-failing interest.

Photo: Anderson.

"THE BURIAL OF COUNT ORGAZ" (DETAIL), BY EL GRECO (1545–1614)

San Tomé, Toledo.

Reality and unreality intermingled in this picture (which shows a Spanish Count about to be buried in the presence of the members of a knightly order) reveal the heightened imagination of a painter whose art reflects the terrors of the Inquisition.

§ 2

Velazquez

These, then, were the principal influences alive in Spanish art when Diego de Silva y Velazquez was born at Seville in 1599. His family was not of Sevillian or even of Spanish origin for his grandfather Diego Rodriguez de Silva came from Oporto, the home of the Silva family. The name which he made world-famous he took from his mother Gernima Velazquez, who belonged to an old Seville family. His father Juan de Silva raised no objections when his son desired to study art, and when he was thirteen or fourteen Velazquez was placed in the studio of Francisco de Herrera (1576-1654), who showed something of the fanaticism of El Greco in the flashing eyes and majestic gestures of the saints in his religious pictures. Herrera is said to have been bad-tempered, and after enduring his roughness for about a year Velazquez changed masters and entered the studio of Francisco Pacheco (1571-1654). There he remained five years, and though his master had no great originality or power, he was probably a good teacher, for he was himself a careful draughtsman, a scholar, and the author of a book on painting. Presumably there was also another attraction, for on April 23, 1618, Velazquez married Pacheco's daughter Juana de Miranda. Henceforward Pacheco did everything he could to advance the interests of his son-in-law.

Within three years occurred the opportunity of a lifetime. Philip III died on March 31, 1621, and the young king Philip IV dismissed the Duke of Lerma and made Count Olivarez his prime minister. Now Olivarez, a son of the Governor of Seville, had lived in that city till 1615 and had made himself popular there as a patron of painters and poets. Several of his old protégés at Seville united to praise to the new minister the extraordinary talent of their young fellow-townsman. Velazquez went to Madrid and, after some vexatious delays, in 1623 Oli-

varez persuaded the young king to give Velazquez a sitting. He conquered at his first brush-stroke. The equestrian portrait he painted is now lost, but it pleased Philip so much that forthwith the painter of twenty-four was appointed Court Painter to a king of eighteen.

From the beginning, Philip treated Velazquez in the most friendly manner. The king is said by a contemporary to have come to his studio "almost every day," by "those secret passages, hung with pictures, which led from the king's rooms to every part of the old Alcazar." The monotony of the stiff routine of the Court was broken in the autumn of 1628 by the arrival of Rubens, who, as stated in the last chapter, came to Madrid on a diplomatic mission, and for nine months was constantly with the king and Velazquez. According to Pacheco and others, Rubens thought highly of Velazquez, and delighted in his society, while his views of the king appear in a letter Rubens wrote to a friend:

> He evidently takes quite a special pleasure in painting, and, in my opinion, this prince is endowed with the finest qualities. I already know him from personal intercourse, as I have a room in the palace, so that he almost daily visits me.

Philip IV appears to have been genuinely interested in painting, a result probably of his intimacy with Velazquez, and after Rubens's visit, and undoubtedly on his advice, the King permitted Velazquez to go to Italy with the great soldier and statesman Spinola, who was to be the Spanish governor of Milan and commander-in-chief in Italy. Velazquez arrived at Milan in the early autumn of 1629 and soon went to Venice, where he made a special study of the work of Tintoretto, who died, it will be remembered, five years before Velazquez was born. From Venice he went to Rome—missing Florence—and after some months there passed on to Naples, where he met Ribera, and

Photo: Anderson.

"EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF DON BALTHASAR CARLOS," BY VELAZQUEZ (1599–1660)

Prado, Madrid.

This quaint and rather pathetic little figure of King Philip's only son is one of the most adorable child portraits ever painted. Note how, with all its apparent naturalness, the artist has fitted horse and rider into a triangular pattern repeated in the landscapes in the distance.

Photo: Anderson.

"PHILIP IV AS A SPORTSMAN," BY VELAZQUEZ

Prado, Madrid.

With unalterable patience and ever fresh inspiration, Velazquez painted his King from youth to age. This portrait is an example of the artist's middle period and should be compared with his later "Æsop" (facing page 139) to show the painter's progres

returned to Madrid early in 1631. At Naples he painted Philip's sister, Mary of Hungary, and this portrait he brought back with him together with his painting "The Forge of Vulcan."

It is customary to divide the art of Velazquez into three periods, of which the first ends with this visit to Italy. Most critics agree that the finest and most typical painting of his first period is the bacchanalian scene known as "The Topers." In the strongly laid shadows of this painting we see the influence of Caravaggio, and while we admire the virile rendering of form and the well-balanced grouping of the figures, yet we feel that the scene, as R. A. M. Stevenson, the cousin of "R. L. S.," wrote in his classic book on Velazquez, "was never beheld as a whole vision in the mind's eye." The painter's complete mastery of his art was yet to come.

The time between his return to Madrid and his departure in 1649 for a second visit to Italy was the happiest period in the life both of Velazquez and of Philip. Daily the artist advanced in the mastery of his art and in the esteem of his sovereign. R. A. M. Stevenson has pointed out that:

> Like Rembrandt, who never ceased to paint his own portrait, Velazquez studied one model, from youth to age, with unalterable patience and an ever-fresh inspiration. He could look at the king's well-known head with a renewed interest, as he went deeper into the mystery of eyesight, and became better informed as to the effects of real light.

Owing to fires and other accidents many of these portraits of Philip have been lost, but twenty-six exist to this day: and they are all different. If we follow the development of the painter's art in these portraits of Philip IV—and nearly a dozen are in England—we shall see the slow transformation of a face, through a hard realism of feature and detail, to the soft,

atmospheric impressionism of the final portraits. The bust portrait of "Philip IV: Old" in the National Gallery, London, is a superb example of the painter's last manner and of the way in which he could steep a whole canvas equally in a soft envelope of light.

What this continual painting of the same model did for Velazquez we can see from the portraits: it helped him to realise what every painter in the end must realise if he intends to excel, that it is not the subject but the treatment that makes the masterpiece. Velazquez found his fundamental inspiration, not in the novelty of a new subject but in the ceaseless pursuit of seeing better and painting better something he had already seen. It is by the ultimate perfection of his rendering of the normal vision of man that Velazquez holds his supreme place among the very greatest masters of art. Other painters have expressed character, ideas, and beauty more poignantly, but nobody before or since has expressed *vision* so splendidly.

What this constant intercourse with a great artist did for Philip IV we can only imagine, but R. A. M. Stevenson again comes to our rescue by picturing in words how lonely is the lot of a king, and particularly in this period of a king of Spain:

> To be a king of Spain, to preside at religious executions, to have a wife whom no man, even to save her life, might touch on pain of death, was to be a creature sorely in need of private liberty, and the solace of confidential intercourse. Philip IV seems to have been naturally kind, genial, and affable, and to have divided his leisure between the hunting-field and Velazquez's studio. The two, artist and king, grew old together, with like interests in horses, dogs, and paintings; thawing when alone into that easy familiarity between master and old servant, freezing instantly in public into the stiff positions that their parts in life required. Painter to the king, when he was scarce twenty-five years old, Velazquez escaped most of the dangers and humiliations of professional portrait-painting,

Photo: Anderson.

"VIEW IN THE GARDEN OF THE VILLA MEDICI, ROME," BY VELAZQUEZ

Prado, Madrid.

Painted during his first visit to Rome in 1630, this sketch from nature shows how Velazquez anticipated the open-air landscape painting of the nineteenth century.

Photo: Anderson.

"THE MAIDS OF HONOUR," BY VELAZQUEZ

Prado, Madrid.

"An absolutely unique thing in the history of art." This intimate picture of the Spanish royal family (see page 138) is unparalleled for its brilliant actuality and its sense of light, space, and air. In no other painting in the world is the third dimension so perfectly expressed.

without losing its useful discipline of the eye, its rigorous test of the ever-present and exacting model.

The Surrender of Breda

It was when Velazquez was about forty that he was called upon to execute what proved to be one of the two supreme achievements of his art. Olivarez had presented the King with a new palace, Buen Retiro, on the heights above the Prado, and the Court Painters, with Velazquez at their head, were commanded to set about its decoration. For the decoration of this palace Velazquez produced his great historical picture "The Surrender of Breda" (facing page 137), which is not only superb as a decoration but as moving in its sentiment as any picture artist ever painted.

The surrender of Breda, a fortified town twenty miles south-east of Dordrecht, was an incident in the memorable, and at first apparently hopeless, struggle which, beginning in 1568, lasted for eighty years and ended in the haughty Spaniards being compelled to recognise the independence of the Dutch Republic. The capture of Breda was one of the last triumphs of Spanish arms before the tide turned against them. This was the subject Velazquez chose for his contribution towards the decoration of Buen Retiro. Notwithstanding the armed crowd and multitude of uniforms, the noble bearing of the principal figures is the first thing that arrests attention. The gestures of Spinola, the Spanish Commander, and of Justin, chief representative of the defeated Dutchmen and bearer of the key to the city, are poignant in expression, and what moves us most of all is the incomparable humanity of the scene. There is no arrogance in the Spanish conqueror, who lays his hand consolingly, almost affectionately, on the shoulder of Justin; in the Dutchman there is all the tragedy of defeat, but he is still dignified and does not cringe to the victor. It is an ennobling presentment of a historic scene.

While admitting that "The Surrender of Breda" challenges the greatest masters on their own ground, rivalling the highest achievements of Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese both in its dignity as illustration and in its beauty as decoration, yet Mr. Stevenson has affirmed that "it is not the complete expression of the Velazquez eyesight." In a sense it is not; it has not the amazing actuality of some of the painter's later works, but it may be questioned whether it is desirable that it should have this quality. This painting, we must remember, was first and foremost a decoration painted to adorn a certain wall in a given apartment, and the experience of centuries has shown that ultra-realism does not produce the most effective forms of decoration, which need a certain deliberate convention to emphasise their beauty as patterns. In "The Surrender of Breda" Velazquez gives us the greatest amount of realism compatible with the success of the picture as a decoration: it fulfils its purpose to perfection, and than this no higher praise can be given.

Just about the time of this painting, Velazquez was introduced to a new sitter, the king's little son Balthasar Carlos. Of the many portraits he made of this prince none is more delightful than the one which shows him on horseback (facing page 132). This quaint and rather pathetic little figure on his prancing steed, with the whole of Spain seemingly summed up and expressed in the landscape behind him, is the most adorable picture ever painted of a small boy. For all his pomp and importance (emphasised by the marshal's baton in his hand), the stern, set face—so like his father's—makes us feel sorry for him. He is very human; we feel that he is a lonely child, and somehow the painter with prophetic insight seems to suggest that he has not long to live. Poor little Balthasar Carlos, born in 1629, did not live to be twenty. In 1646 he caught a cold at Saragossa and died. Thereafter Velazquez had no royal prince to paint, and Philip IV had to lavish all his domestic affection on a little

Photo: Bruckmann.

"THE MELON-EATERS," BY MURILLO (1617–82)

Munich.

Taken from life, this picture is an example of the painter's early style, and gives pleasure both by its warm humanity and by the realistic painting of the still-life accessories.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE SURRENDER OF BREDA," BY VELAZQUEZ

Prado, Madrid.

Incomparable in its humanity is this decorative commemoration of one of the last triumphs of Spanish arms in the Dutch war of independence. Spinola, the Spanish conqueror, lays his hand almost affectionately on the shoulders of Justin the Dutchman, who sadly, but with respectful dignity, delivers up the key of the surrendered city.

princess, the Infanta Maria Teresa, who had been born in 1638. Soon after her arrival troubles came thick upon Spain. Olivarez mismanaged matters badly and was disgraced in 1643; and the same year those lances of Spain, hitherto invincible, which we see in "The Surrender of Breda," themselves suffered the agony of defeat and were utterly crumpled up and crushed at Rocroi by the great French commander Condé. Domestic griefs accompanied these public misfortunes, for two years before he lost his son, Philip lost his wife the Queen Isabella.

In 1649 Velazquez again visited Italy, no longer the follower of an all-conquering army but the agent of a monarch whose power was waning. He landed at Genoa on January 2, and passing through Milan made for Venice, where he purchased several pictures for the King. This, indeed, was the principal object of his journey. From Venice he went to Rome, where he painted the splendid portrait of Innocent X which now hangs in the Doria Palace, Rome, and met several artists of note—among them being Salvator Rosa (1615-73), the Neapolitan painter of brigands and wild scenery, and Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), the polished Frenchman, who in his classical subjects carried on the tradition of the great Renaissance and in his landscapes was a real pioneer.

In the summer of 1651 Velazquez returned to Madrid, where still further honours awaited him. He was made Marshal of the Palace, and as Philip IV had married again during his absence —married his own niece Mariana of Austria, a girl of fourteen—the new Marshal was kept busy organising festivities and tournaments for the amusement of the young Queen. By this second wife Philip had the Princess Margaret, born 1651, who is the central figure in the world-famous "Las Meninas." This picture (facing page 135), in English "The Maids of Honour," marks the culmination of the third period of Velazquez and is the supreme achievement of his life.

"The Maids of Honour"

Here, indeed, we have "the complete expression of the Velazquez eyesight," and great and glorious as "The Surrender of Breda" is, we are bound to confess that R. A. M. Stevenson was right in maintaining that this historical picture is not—like "The Maids of Honour"—an absolutely unique thing in the history of art." Like so many of the greatest pictures in the world, "The Maids of Honour" originated in a spontaneous and unpremeditated flash of intense vision. The story generally accepted is that Velazquez was painting the king, who sat in the spot from which the spectator is supposed to see the picture of "Las Meninas." During a moment's rest the "Infanta" came in with her attendants, and the king was struck with the group which fell together before his eyes. Near him he saw the princess, her maids of honour Maria Sarmiento and Isabel de Velasco (who is offering her water), her dog, and her dwarfs Mari Barbola and Nicolasito Pertusato; a little farther on the left, Velazquez, who had stepped back to look at his picture; farther back on the right, a duenna and courtier talking; while at the distant end of the gallery the king saw his queen and himself reflected in a mirror, and through the open door Don Joseph Nieto drawing back a curtain. The canvas shown in the picture would naturally be, as Stevenson maintains, the one on which Velazquez was painting the king's portrait. Some, however, will have it to be the very canvas of "Las Meninas," which Velazquez was painting from a reflection in a mirror placed near to where the king had been sitting. R. A. M. Stevenson has justly pointed out that the perspective in the picture hardly seems to agree with this view, but rather makes Velazquez to have been working on the king's right hand. It is not a matter of importance, and the story of the conception of the picture may easily have got mixed in the telling. It is just possible that Velazquez was painting, or was about to paint, a portrait of the Infanta only, when the idea of the large picture sudden-

Photo Alinari.

"THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION," BY MURILLO

The Louvre Paris.

Innocence and sweetness characterise this ideal of the Virgin, whose upward gaze seems to indicate not longing, so much as naïve astonishment. Compared with El Greco's burial scene (facing page 131) this painting indicates a great change in the type of religious presentation

Photo: Anderson.

"ÆSOP," BY VELAZQUEZ

Prado, Madrid.

This incomparably real portrayal of a ragged philosopher is a superb example of the last manner of Velazquez, when a soft atmospheric impressionism has replaced the harder realism of his earlier paintings.

ly occurred to him or to the king. The canvas of "Las Meninas" is made of separate pieces sewn together, and one of these just contains the Infanta, with room for accessories or a subordinate figure. However it originated, the picture was immediately recognised as a brilliant triumph, and tradition says the Red Cross of Santiago on the painter's breast was painted there by the king's own hand, as a promise of the honour that was to be conferred on him afterwards.

It is hard to conceive of a more beautiful piece of painting than this—so free and yet firm and so revealing. When one stands before this canvas one is not concerned with any consideration of who it was painted by; it fills the mind and suffices. Like all of the great artists, Velazquez takes something out of life and sets it free. The men and women in his finest pictures are released from what someone has called "mankind's little daily cage"; and we are startled at the representation. In this portrait group we have life stated so intensely that the ordinary life around us seems almost unreal.

The same intense and startling impression of life is given us by the paintings of single figures executed by Velazquez during his last years. If we compare the shabby but dignified philosopher "Æsop" (facing page 139)—a fine example of his late style—with "Philip IV as a Sportsman" (facing page 133), which is admittedly one of the best full-lengths of his middle period, we shall begin to realise how far Velazquez travelled during the intervening years, not merely in the rendering of form but in the painting of light and air.

In 1659 Cardinal Mazarin sealed the reconciliation between France and Spain by arranging a marriage between the young Louis XIV and Maria Teresa of Spain. The meeting of the two courts on the frontier and the organising of the imposing ceremonies required, burdened the Marshal of the Palace with a multiplicity of work and anxiety. The wedding took place on June 7, but it was the last function Velazquez was able to

perform. At sixty years of age the strain was too much for him, and a few weeks after he had returned to Madrid he collapsed and died on August 6, 1660.

In a sense it may be said that the most surprising adventures of Velazquez occurred after his death. By birth a hidalgo (*i. e.* a member of the lesser nobility), Velazquez was buried like a grandee. The entire court attended his funeral, and knights of all orders took part in the ceremonies. But after the generation that knew the man had passed away, the glory of the painter was strangely and unaccountable forgotten. For two hundred years, during which picture-lovers flocked to Italy and Italian artists became daily more famous, the name of Velazquez was seldom mentioned. Then, about fifty years ago, the sympathy of two or three great artists, notably Whistler in England and Manet in France, broke the spell of silence, and supported by a galaxy of writers, among whom was R. A. M. Stevenson—from whose great book *The Art of Velazquez* we have freely quoted—these enthusiasts made the light of Velazquez to shine before all men, so that to-day he is and evermore will be a star of the first magnitude in the firmament of Art.

§ 3

Zurbaran

Contemporary with Velazquez, but influenced in his style of painting not so much by him as by Caravaggio, was the monastic painter Francisco Zurbaran (1598-1662), who, though born in the province of Estremadura, came to Seville when he was only sixteen and is generally regarded as a member of the School of Seville. He is chiefly famous for his religious pictures, and particularly for his monastic visions, among which "The Apotheosis of St. Thomas" in the Museum of Seville ranks as his masterpiece. His monks in white sheets often appear to be carved owing to the effect of high relief obtained by strong con-

"VENUS AND CUPID," BY VELAZQUEZ

This superb example of the last manner of Velazquez, unique among all his great works for its refined and natural rendering of a classical subject, was for many years in an English private collection. In 1906 it was exhibited at Messrs. Agnews' gallery and was on the eve of being sold to America, when the National Art Collections Fund by indefatigable exertions raised the sum of £45,000, and in the New Year of 1907 secured the picture for the National Gallery, London.

trasts of light and shade, and the feeling of austerity and grandeur they display makes the paintings of Zurbaran illuminating documents of monastic life in Spain during the seventeenth century.

Murillo

Among the immediate pupils of Velazquez were Juan Battista del Mazo (1600-67), who (in 1634) became his son-in-law and imitated his portraiture so cleverly that some of his paintings were at one time confounded with those by his master; and one who became still more famous, Bartolome Esteban Murillo (1617-82). Also born at Seville, Murillo passed through a whole gamut of influences before he developed a distinct style of his own. When he was twenty-four he came to Madrid for a couple of years, and when he returned he did not forget the lessons of Velazquez. From this period date those popular pictures of beggar-boys and low-life subjects which were the first to bring fame. "The Melon-eaters" (facing page 136) is a fine example of this side of Murillo's art. It charms the layman by its warm and graceful sympathy with life; it delights the artist by the skill and taste shown in the painting of the accessories. The rind of the melon, the bloom of the grapes, the wicker of the woven baskets, all are depicted not only with great beauty of colour but with rare fidelity to the *textures* of the different objects.

Later in life Murillo altered his methods and employed a softer and more suave style, in which outlines are lost in the delicate fusion of graduated colours. The mysterious vaporous effect thus obtained was a variant of Correggio's famous "smoky" style (see Chapter IV), but has been distinguished from his by being technically described as *vaporoso*. Among the multitude of Murillo's religious paintings in this style the most famous is "The Immaculate Conception" (facing page 138), now in the Louvre, which the French Government acquired in 1852

for the sum of £23,440. The change in the type of religious presentation is marked if we compare this painting with the frenzy of El Greco or the dramatic action displayed in a Titian or a Tintoretto. The storm and strife of the Reformation and counter-Reformation are passing away, and the enervation of the once combative Spain finds expression in a soft serenity that dreams of an ideal world. Not tragedy nor power, but innocence and sweetness characterise this vision of Mary, whose eyes, as a modern critic has pointed out, are not filled with inspiration and longing, but "astonished as those of a child gazing upon the splendour of the candles of a Christmas-tree."

Murillo was very famous in his lifetime, and the sweet sentimentality of his paintings appealed so strongly to the eighteenth and to the nineteenth century that for nearly two hundred years after his death he was considered the foremost of Spanish painters. To-day at least three Spanish painters, Velazquez, Goya, and El Greco, are rated more highly. Senhor A. de Beruete y Moret, the learned director of the Prado Museum at Madrid, has stated that

> The art of Murillo is of less interest than formerly, owing to present-day preferences, which seek spirituality in art, a force, and even a restlessness which we do not find in the work of this artist. . . . His conceptions are beautiful, but superficial. There is in them no more skilful groundwork, dramatic impulse, nor exaltation than appears at first sight. To comprehend and enjoy them it is not necessary to think; their contemplation leaves the beholder tranquil, they do not possess the power to distract, they have no warmth, nor that distinction which makes a work unique.

Historically the art of Murillo must be regarded as a sign of the decadence of Spain, and it was not till a century later that the country gave birth to another great artist; then the agony of the Wars of Succession found expression through the grim,

satirical powers of Goya, whose work will be considered when we come to the art of the Napoleonic period.

The political power and prosperity of Spain rose to its zenith between the reigns of Philip II and Philip IV and flowered in the paintings of El Greco and Velazquez. But as the power of Spain weakened and her prosperity dwindled, so also did the glory of her art begin to wane. It is not without significance that all the great painters of Spain, Murillo included, were born before 1648, the year in which the humbled Spanish empire was compelled to recognise the independence of the Netherlands by the Peace of Münster. Immediately after Velazquez we must look for the great masters of the seventeenth century, not in decaying Spain, but in Holland, victorious and independent, the country of Hals and Rembrandt.

IX

HOW ART ROSE WITH THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

HOW ART ROSE WITH THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

THE WORK OF FRANS HALS AND REMBRANDT

§ 1

SHORTLY before the Spanish army began its seven months' siege of Haarlem in the winter of 1572–3, a burgher of that city named Pieter Hals made his escape with his wife and family, and found shelter in Antwerp. Well for the world that he did so, for had he taken part in the heroic defence of his native city he might have been killed in the general butchery that followed when the Spaniards at last took the town; and then one of the world's greatest painters would never have been born.

Frans Hals

Of the life of his son comparatively little is known, but it is tolerably certain that Frans Hals was born at Antwerp in 1580, that is to say, about five years after El Greco's arrival in Spain. Exactly when the Hals family returned to Haarlem is not known, but since the younger son, Dirk Hals (1591–1656), is reputed to have been born in Haarlem, it may be conjectured that the Hals family returned some time between 1590 and 1600. By the latter date Frans Hals was certainly working in Haarlem, and there he remained all his life.

The police records of Haarlem show that on February 20, 1616, Frans Hals was summoned for maltreating his wife (Anneke Hermans), was severely reprimanded, and dismissed on the undertaking that he would eschew drunken company and

reform. On this one fact, which is indisputable, gossip has built up a legend that Hals was a man of imperfect morals and a continuous and habitual drunkard. But, as Mr. Gerald S. Davies has pointed out, drunkenness is not only a moral but a physical matter, and it is physically impossible that a confirmed inebriate should have had a hand steady enough to paint the pictures Hals painted when he was sixty and older.

We must admit an ugly passage in the painter's life—though, as a Scottish critic once observed, we do not know what provocation Hal's wife gave him!—and we must conclude that his first marriage was miserable. The poor woman died soon after the police-court case—though not, it would seem, as the result of her husband's misconduct—and a year later Hals married again. His second wife became the mother of many children, surviving her husband after fifty years of married life, and since she never had occasion to take him to the police court we may reasonably conclude that Hals was *not* an habitual wife-beater.

He appears to have been a jovial and very human being, fond of a glass in good company, and now and then, perhaps, taking one too many; a real Bohemian, as his paintings of gipsies and strolling players attest; but he was not a social outcast, or he would not have been constantly employed by respectable citizens and important corporations, nor would he at the age of sixty-four have been appointed a director of the Guild of St. Lucas, which protected the interests of the artists and craftsmen of Haarlem.

Yet towards the end of his life, when his honourable position cannot be assailed, he was in sad financial difficulties. At one time he supplemented his income by teaching, and Adriaen Brouwer (1605–38) and A. J. van Ostade (1610–85) were among his pupils; but this connection did not last, and in 1652 he was distrained upon for debt by his baker, Jan Ykess. Ten years later his distress was such that he had to apply to the

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co

"NURSE AND CHILD," BY FRANS HALS (1580–1666)

Berlin.

Look well at the face of this babe and you will see it "just beginning to ripple all over with the laughter that will come in a minute." The picture shows the artist's power to seize a fleeting expression, and the keen eye and steady hand needed to paint the elaborate details of lace and embroidery.

Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"REUNION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE GUILD OF ARCHERS OF ST. ADRIAEN," BY FRANS HALS

Haarlem.

Very similar to our own Honourable Artillery Company when it was first instituted, these Guilds of Dutch citizen-soldiers played a gallant part in the eighty years' struggle with Spain which ended in the independence of the Dutch Republic.

Municipal Council for aid, and was given the sum of 150 florins; two years later he had to apply again, and this time (1664) the Council voted the old man a yearly pension of 200 gulden. That year Hals, now eighty-four years of age, painted his last two pictures, portraits of the "Managers of the Almshouses at Haarlem," and in 1666 he died, and was buried on September 7 in the choir of the Church of St. Bavon.

The Elation of Victory

Properly to appreciate the art of Frans Hals, there is one thing we must never forget, namely, that all the work of his maturity was done during the excitement of war. It was a war which must have thrilled every Dutchman through and through, for it was waged to defend hearth and home and to deliver the fatherland from a foreign yoke; it was a war in which one of the smallest nations in Europe had the hardihood to challenge the mightiest empire of the time. It began in 1568, about twelve years before Hals was born, and as he grew up the apparent hopelessness of the conflict disappeared, and the gaiety and elation of victory in sight began to sparkle in his paintings. When Hals first painted the officers of the St. Joris' Shooting Guild in 1616 the issue was still doubtful, when he painted the last of his great series of military groups in 1639, again of the "Officers of St. Joris' Shooting Guild," the ultimate triumph of Holland was a foregone conclusion. In the earliest group many of the faces appear anxious and worried, but see how happy they all are even in the "Reunion of the Officers of the Guild of Archers of St. Adriaen" (facing pages 149-50), a picture painted in 1633. These stout fellows bear their fortune with varying demeanours; some are smiling and jovial, some are grave and stern, one or two are evidently elated, one or two are thoughtful, but *all are confident.* In no countenance can a trace of doubt be felt, and their freedom from anxiety finds its parallel in the flowing brush of the painter, equally confident and unerring.

If in the intoxication of victory, coming and assured, some of the soldier-patriots of Holland became boisterous in their exuberance, who will blame them? And who will blame Hals if in this great and exhilarating period his art also becomes boisterous and exuberant.

It was nearly a quarter of a century before the final victory and the Spanish acknowledgment of Holland's independence, when Frans Hals about 1624 painted that portrait of an officer known all over the world as "The Laughing Cavalier" (see Colour-Plate). The treatment and the subject are in complete unity, for the swagger of the brushwork is in harmony with the swaggering pose of the officer. Mr. Davies, the Master of Charterhouse, has commented on the extraordinary mobility of feature in the expression of this portrait—how at one moment the face of the cavalier seems provocatively disdainful, at another full of amused good-humour. Another brilliant example of the unrivalled power of Hals to catch a fleeting expression will be found in his later painting, "Nurse and Child" (facing page 148), a work which with its wonderfully elaborate and intricate detail no alcoholic hand could possibly have painted. Look well at this babe with its odd little old face, and you will see it "just beginning to ripple all over with the laughter that will come in a minute." Mr. Davies thinks Hals must have learnt the knack of this from watching his own children in his own home, and surely we may say with conviction that the man who could paint babies with so penetrating an eye was a good father.

Splendid as these two paintings are, good as the portraits by Hals in the National Gallery, London, yet to know Hals to the uttermost it is necessary to visit his home-town of Haarlem and to see there the series of great portrait-groups he painted of the Guilds, the "Archers of Saint George" (Joris) and the "Archers of Saint Adriaen." These shooting guilds may be roughly described as equivalent to our own Honourable Artillery Company when it was first instituted.

Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"REUNION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE GUILD OF ARCHERS OF ST. ADRIAEN," BY FRANS HALS

Haarlem.

In these vivacious portrait groups Hals, with his confident and flowing brush strokes, expresses the exuberance of his own nature and of his country in the hour of approaching victory.

Photo: Alinari.

"THE ARTIST AND HIS FIRST WIFE," BY REMBRANDT (1607–69).

Dresden.

In this early picture Rembrandt shows himself feast-making with his bride. It is almost the only riotously joyful self-portrait painted by an artist whose life was full of sorrow.

It is in these paintings of the citizen-soldiers of his own city that Hals displays his highest gifts both as a decorator and as a painter of actuality. The figures are so real that we who look at them seem to be one of the company; but though the arrangement appears so natural our eyes are always gladdened by a beauty of pattern, a flow of line, and a balancing of masses which testify to the painter's science of design. There is nothing with which we can compare them save "The Surrender of Breda," and in making this comparison we must not forget that if Velazquez was his contemporary he was also by nearly twenty years the junior of Hals. It is easy to count up the qualities lacking in the art of Frans Hals, who had neither the grave dignity and mastery of light that Velazquez possessed, nor the scenic splendour of Rubens, nor the thought of his contemporary Rembrandt; but a painter, like a man, must be judged by what he is —not by what he is not—and Hals keeps his place among the great masters by his own peculiar gifts as an exuberant, and indeed an inspired, portrayer of the bravery of Holland in her greatest hour.

§ 2

There is this initial difference between Hals and Rembrandt, that whereas Hals passed the greater part of his working life during a time of war, Rembrandt attained his maturity and executed most of his greatest works after the conclusion of peace. Hals lived in and depicted a life of action, when men must be up and doing and there was no time to think; Rembrandt's middle years and old age were spent in an age of comparative peace and quiet, when Holland had the leisure to think and to meditate not only on the greatness of her political achievements but on the problems of life. Hals expressed the gallantry of Holland in action; Rembrandt, the profundity of her thought.

Rembrandt

One ought not to lay too much stress on a mere coincidence, yet when we remember the philosophical temper of his art it seems peculiarly appropriate that Rembrandt should have been born in the university town of Leyden, the headquarters of Dutch philosophy and learning. He came into the world on July 15, 1607, being the fifth and youngest son of Hermon Gerritzoon van Rijn, a prosperous miller who possessed a mill, several fields, and other property. The parents were ambitious for their youngest son and sent him to school "to learn the Latin tongue to prepare himself for the Academy of Leyden, so that in the fulness of time he might serve the city and the Republic with his knowledge."

The boy, however, did not take kindly to book-learning, but was for ever drawing and designing. At school Rembrandt is said to have been one of the idle pupils who "during their writing lessons, when they ought to be writing, scrawl figures of vessels and animals all over the margins of their books." He was at the University in 1620, but it soon became clear to his father that it was unprofitable for Rembrandt to continue his studies there. His aptitude for art was unmistakable, and accordingly he was apprenticed first to Jacob van Swanenburch, and afterwards to Pieter Lastman, of Amsterdam, a fashionable portrait-painter of the day.

Six months were enough to satiate this earnest young student with the smooth and flattering trivialities of a fashionable merchant of likenesses, and in 1624 he returned to Leyden to study and practice painting by himself. One of the earliest of his known and dated pictures is "St. Paul in Prison," painted in 1627, and now at Stuttgart. This picture shows the precise rendering of detail characteristic of his early style, but also anticipates the light effect of his later work by the way in which the light is concentrated on the head of the apostle. That the painter had already attracted some attention is clear from the

Photo: W. A. M[illegible]

"THE ARTIST'S SON, TITUS," BY REMBRANDT

Wallace Collection, London.

In this portrait of his only son we see a superb example of Rembrandt's later style, which should be compared with his earlier portrait group. The features here are built up boldly by patches of light and shade, and the portrait has a consequent softness and richness as compared with the earlier work.

Photo: Bruckmann.

"HENDRICKJE STOFFELS," BY REMBRANDT

Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin.

First his maidservant and then his second wife, Hendrickje was a loyal helpmate to Rembrandt. By her own efforts she practically supported him during his worst financial crisis, and she was a devoted mother to Titus, his son by his first wife.

fact that in the following year Gerard Dou, a promising boy of fifteen, was placed with him as a pupil.

The Romance of a Portrait

About 1631 Rembrandt removed from Leyden to Amsterdam, an important step taken no doubt owing to the increasing number of portrait commissions he received from the rich merchants of this flourishing city. He had also made some reputation for himself as an etcher, and in 1632 Hendrik van Uylenburg, who had previously published some of his etchings, commissioned Rembrandt to paint a portrait of Saskia van Uylenburg, a young cousin of the print-seller. The acquaintance thus begun soon ripened into love, and the form and face of this dainty little patrician, an orphan who had lost both her parents, suddenly becomes the prevailing theme both in the painted and etched work of Rembrandt. The attraction was mutual, and though her relatives disapproved of the attachment, considering the painter not good enough for a well-dowered young lady of quality, yet love won the day, and Rembrandt and Saskia were married in 1634. The veiled hostility shown by his bride's relations led the painter to relieve his feelings by painting a series of pictures illustrating the life of Samson, in which Saskia is the Delilah, the artist Samson, and the Philistines, of course, are his wife's relatives. These paintings not only express the artist's defiance of family pride, but also his attitude towards the world at large, and his recurring amazement at his having won for himself so sweet a maid. The joyous picture (facing page 151) of himself with Saskia on his knee, shows Rembrandt at the zenith of his happiness. Still popular as a painter, his portraits were sought after, he had a crowd of pupils, and a charming wife who brought him a moderate fortune. The young couple felt that the world was their own, and behaved like children in their utter disregard of the value of money. Rem-

brandt kept on buying new jewels and fine stuffs with which to deck his beloved and paint her in a new guise: he bought the works of other artists and beautiful objects of all kinds, wishing to create a fairy world around a fairy wife. But soon all this luxurious beauty was overshadowed by sorrow. Two children died one after the other, and in 1642 Saskia herself died after giving birth to the boy Titus.

Rembrandt had had his fun and now came the time to pay. Already money was beginning to be scarce, and his popularity as a portrait-painter was beginning to wane. In the year Saskia died Rembrandt had completed his great picture the "Sortie" or "Night Watch" (facing page 156), which though to-day the most popular of all his works and universally ranked among his greatest achievements, almost destroyed the contemporary reputation of the painter and began that decline of his fortunes which ended in his bankruptcy.

"The Night Watch"

The subject of this picture is explicitly stated in an inscription on the back of an old copy of it in water-colour which is in a private collection in Holland: "The young Laird of Purmerlandt (Frans Banning Cocq) in his capacity as Captain gives to his Lieutenant, the Laird of Vlaerdingen, the command to march out his burgher-company." This amply justifies the more correct title of "The Sortie," but the purpose and hour of this "going out" of a company of civic militia are not easy to define. In the eighteenth century it was assumed to be a nocturnal watch turning out on its rounds by artificial light, hence the French name for the picture "Ronde de Nuit," which has been anglicised as "The Night Watch." But as Prof. Baldwin Brown of Edinburgh University justly pointed out, the time is "certainly the day and not the night. The shadow of the captain's outstretched hand and arm is thrown by the sun upon the yellow dress of the second in command, and it is easy to see by

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"THE LAUGHING CAVALIER," BY FRANS HALS

"One of the most remarkable characters painted in the period of the gallant young cavalier. . . . The inner spirit of the man, with its air of supreme contempt at circumstance, its expression of [illegible] nature of mockery," [illegible] Dowdy, "Masters of Painted Form." "But the expression, possibly of unconscious, full of that [illegible] moment which [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] moment when he gazed from the easel.

the relative positions of object and shadow that the sun is still pretty high in the heavens."

Before we too hastily condemn those who condemned this splendid picture, we must put ourselves in their position. To see what Captain Banning Cocq and his friends expected we should turn back and look at Hals' portrait group of the Guild of Archers. They expected to be painted like that, and Rembrandt painted them like this! In point of fact, Rembrandt did not paint *them,* he painted the *scene.* Hals shows a collection of individual officers, each of whom is clearly seen and recognisable. Rembrandt shows a patrol many of whose members are lost in shadow and unable to be identified. As a picture Rembrandt's work has splendid qualities of drama, lighting, and movement which we cannot find in the Hals; but Captain Banning Cocq and his friends did not want to see these qualities, they wanted to see themselves. Rembrandt had painted a great picture, but he had dealt a heavy blow to human vanity, and his contemporaries could not forgive him.

The First Expressionist

It must be admitted that Rembrandt was wilful and wayward. He would go his own way, and he was only justified by the greatness of his genius. He was, as Dr. Muther has said, "The first artist who, in the modern sense, did not execute commissions, but expressed his own thoughts. The emotions which moved his inmost being were the only things which he expressed on canvas. He does not seem to think that anyone is listening to him, but only speaks with himself; he is anxious, not to be understood by others, but only to express his moods and feelings."

An interesting example of the liberties Rembrandt took with his nominal subject will be found in the Wallace Collection. The picture now known as "The Centurion Cornelius" used to be called "The Unmerciful Servant," and commentators explained that the figure in the turban and red robe was Christ,

and enlarged on the displeasure shown in his face and the guilt and fear of the Unrighteous Servant, whom they took to be the central of the three figures to the right. Then a mezzotint by James Ward, published in 1800, was discovered, and in this reproduction the correct title was given. The red-robed figure proved to be Cornelius, in no way "displeased," while the remaining three figures are "two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually" (Acts x. 7). This widely-spread error shows how easy it is to misread pictures if they are approached with preconceived ideas. The misunderstanding, of course, has been brought about by Rembrandt's fondness for oriental splendour, which led him to put a Roman centurion in Asiatic costume! It is not "correct" in the way that Alma-Tadema's classical scenes are; but real greatness in art does not depend on accuracy of antiquarian details—however praiseworthy this may be—but on largeness of conception, noble design, and splendid colour.

Overwhelmed by his domestic sorrows—he lost his old mother two years before Saskia died—neglected by his former patrons, Rembrandt turned to nature for consolation. He wandered about the countryside recording all he saw. Practically all his landscapes were painted between 1640 and 1652. Many of his most beautiful landscape etchings were also executed during this period. The most famous of them all, "The Three Trees" (facing page 158), was done in 1643. It shows a view of Amsterdam from a slight eminence outside the town, and a storm-cloud and its shadow are used to intensify the brilliance of the light and the dramatic aspect of his mood of nature. This is landscape in the grand style; but its homelier, more intimate note appealed equally to the artist. A lovely example of the picturesque corner portrayed for its own intrinsic beauty is the etching executed in 1645 known as "Six's Bridge" (facing page 157). Tradition relates that this plate was etched against time for a wager at the country house of Rembrandt's most loyal

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE NIGHT WATCH," OR "THE SORTIE," BY REMBRANDT

Amsterdam.

"Turn out the guard!" This dramatic rendering of a company of militia about to march displeased the officers who had commissioned the painting because Rembrandt had painted a *scene* mysterious in its light and shadow. The officers wanted a collection of recognisable likenesses. Now acknowledged as a great masterpiece, the picture ruined Rembrandt's practice as a portrait-painter.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE BLINDNESS OF TOBIT," ETCHING BY REMBRANDT

Never has the pathos of a blind man's groping been more movingly expressed than in this etching.

"SIX'S BRIDGE," BY REMBRANDT (1645)

Etched for a wager while a servant was fetching mustard, forgotten for lunch, from a neighbouring village, this delightful little landscape shows the delicacy of Rembrandt's handling and the swift sureness of his drawing.

Photo: Braun.

"THE 'LANSDOWNE' MILL," BY REMBRANDT

In his appreciation of the veil of beauty which atmosphere casts over a scene, as well as in his capacity to find strangeness in the familiar and beauty in the commonplace, Rembrandt anticipated the romantic landscapes of the nineteenth century. A few years ago this picture was sold for £100,000 by Lord Lansdowne to an American collector, Mr. J. E. Widener.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"FRANÇOISE VAN WASSERHOVEN," BY REMBRANDT

National Gallery, London.

This noble rendering of the dignity of age teaches us that while physical beauty may be only "skin-deep" and quickly fades, beauty of character endures while life lasts.

friend, Jan Six, while the servant was fetching the mustard, that had been forgotten for a meal, from a neighbouring village. There is nothing impossible in the story, for Rembrandt is known to have been an impetuous and rapid worker on occasion; but if this little masterpiece was done in haste, we must not forget that it was also done with "the knowledge of a lifetime."

Even while Saskia was alive Rembrandt was in want of ready money, and when on his mother's death in 1640 he inherited a half-share of a mill, he hastened to have it transferred to his brother Wilhelm and his nephew. Though he lost money by the transaction he probably gained his end in keeping all the mill in the family instead of a share going to his creditors. Then in 1647 he became involved in lawsuits with Saskia's family, who objected to Rembrandt's connection with his servant Hendrickje Stoffels, and wished to prevent Rembrandt from being trustee for his and Saskia's son Titus. These lawsuits, which lasted till after 1653, and ended in Saskia's relatives obtaining the trusteeship but not the custody of Titus, greatly contributed to Rembrandt's difficulties.

The Genius Bankrupt

His marriage with Hendrickje Stoffels, a woman of humble birth, was another cause of offence to aristocratic patrons; all the same, it was a wise action. This devoted woman mothered Titus with loving and unremitting care; she made great efforts to stem the tide of ill-fortune, and when the crash came and Rembrandt was made bankrupt in 1656, she loyally shared her husband's troubles and used her wits to rebuild their fortunes. As soon as Titus was old enough she combined with him in keeping an old curiosity shop, starting, one imagines, with some relics of the treasures Rembrandt had amassed for Saskia. Money, or the want of it, however, was not a thing which could profoundly trouble a philosophic dreamer like Rembrandt. If he had it, he spent it royally; if he had it not, he

went without. Only a year after his bankruptcy he achieved one of the world's masterpieces of portraiture, "The Artist's Son Titus" (facing page 152), in the Wallace Collection. If you look at the Pellicorne portraits, also in the Wallace Collection, you will obtain a fair idea of Rembrandt's ordinary professional style in 1632-4, when his painting was still popular. But how thin and shallow these early portraits seem beside this haunting and passionate portrait of the son he loved so dearly. Turning to the "Titus" after these early works, we see how far Rembrandt has travelled. Three or four years later he painted the wonderful "Portrait of Françoise van Wasserhoven," in the National Gallery, one of the most reverent, sympathetic, and intimate studies of old age ever painted.

Throughout his life Rembrandt was a keen student of human nature, and no painter has ever penetrated further than he did into the inner lives of the men and women he painted. His wonderful insight into character made him the greatest psychologist in portraiture the world has yet seen, and since he searched faces above all for the marks of life's experience which they bore, old people—who had had the longest experience—were inevitably subjects peculiarly dear to him and subjects which he interpreted with consummate mastery. His own face he painted over and over again, and if we study the sequence of his self-portraiture from early manhood to ripe old age, we see not only the gradual development of his technical powers but also the steady advance made by Rembrandt in expressing with poignant intensity the thoughts and emotions of humanity.

His Technique

Of Rembrandt's technique Sir John Everett Millais wrote: "In his first period Rembrandt was very careful and minute in detail, and there is evidence of stippling in his flesh paintings; but in the fulness of his power all appearance of such manipulation and minuteness vanished in the breadth and facility of his

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE THREE TREES," ETCHING BY REMBRANDT

Though we see to the left a distant view of Amsterdam, this masterly etching is not merely a transcription of something seen, but a dramatic rendering of a mood of nature. Its grandeur is unequalled in etching and has rarely been approached in painting.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"CHRIST WITH THE SICK AROUND HIM, RECEIVING LITTLE CHILDREN," ETCHING BY REMBRANDT

The most famous of Rembrandt's etchings, this is popularly known as the "Hundred Guilder Print" from the price it once realized at auction early in the eighteenth century. No work shows more splendidly Rembrandt's command of the etcher's art and his deep insight into manifold phases of human character and emotion.

brush, though the advantage of his early manner remained. . . I have closely examined his pictures in the National Gallery, and have actually seen beneath the grand veil of breadth, the early work that his art conceals from untrained eyes—the whole science of painting." Among his contemporaries the minute detail in the work of his earlier period was far more admired than the "veil of breadth" which he cast over his later paintings, and it was long before people who admired his early portraits could be persuaded that his later paintings were not only equally good, but vastly superior both in workmanship and expression.

Gradually among the discerning few the outstanding excellence of Rembrandt's portraiture was again acknowledged, and in 1661 he received a commission for another official portrait group. He was asked to paint a portrait group of five officials of the Cloth-makers' Company, and staging them on the dais on which they presided over a meeting, Rembrandt produced the wonder-work known as "The Syndics." Avoiding the dangers of "The Sortie" Rembrandt places all five figures in a clear light and yet gives them the unity of a scene taken from life.

Alas! this fresh artistic triumph was dearly paid for by more domestic misfortunes. Soon after this work was completed, Hendrickje the loyal helpmate died. Titus, now grown up, married his cousin, and after less than a year of married life he also died. Now, indeed, Rembrandt was alone in the world, and though a posthumous daughter to Titus was born in 1669, the artist, now in his sixty-third year, was too worn out to struggle much longer against "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." He lived long enough to see his little granddaughter Titia christened after her father, and then crushed by the accumulated sorrows of a lifetime passed to his long rest on October 4, 1669. To all appearance the illness and death of the greatest man Holland ever produced passed unnoticed, and only the bare fact of his burial in the Westerkerk, Amsterdam, is attested by an official entry.

X

DUTCH PAINTING IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

DUTCH PAINTING IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE ART OF CUYP, DOU, HOBBEMA, DE HOOCH, POTTER, MAES, RUISDAEL, VAN DE VELDE, AND VERMEER OF DELFT

§ 1

WE saw in the last chapter how, after a long struggle, the yoke of the Spaniards was broken, and the independence of the Dutch Republic was established in 1648 by the Peace of Münster. This event is commemorated by Terborch's picture (in the National Gallery) of the signing of the Treaty; in this it will be noticed that the Protestant Dutch delegates (on our left) raise their hands to affirm, while the Roman Catholic plenipotentiaries of Spain lay their hands on the Gospels to take the oath. Careful and exact both in the portraiture of those present and in the painting of every little detail, this moderate-sized picture expresses the sober spirit in which Holland celebrated her victory.

Art for the Home

While of considerable historic interest, this picture is not a supreme masterpiece of art; it is not so effective as the same painter's "Portrait of a Gentleman," a small full-length figure which also hangs in the National Gallery. Historical subjects did not call forth the highest powers of the painters of the Netherlands. The art of Holland was neither an ecclesiastical nor a state art: it was a domestic art which produced pictures,

not for churches or public buildings, but for the private homes of citizens. So wonderful was the artistic activity inspired by the wave of patriotism which swept through Holland, that the name of these so-called "Little Masters" is truly legion, and no attempt can be made in this OUTLINE to mention each by name. Only a few representative artists can be selected for individual notice.

Brouwer

Chronologically, the first place among the Little Masters is claimed by Adriaen Brouwer (1605-38), whose "Boor Asleep" is one of the most precious Dutch pictures in the Wallace Collection. It is still a matter of dispute whether Brouwer was born in Holland or Flanders, but he certainly spent his youth in Haarlem, where he studied under Frans Hals. Afterwards he worked both in Amsterdam and Antwerp. How highly Brouwer was esteemed by other painters of his time is shown by the fact that Rubens possessed seventeen of his pictures, while even Rembrandt in spite of his financial difficulties managed to collect and retain eight Brouwers. A humorous vividness of vision, concise and vigorous drawing, and an enamel-like beauty of colour are the distinctive qualities of his art.

Gerard Dou

Apart from the landscape-painters—whom we must consider subsequently—most of the Dutch painters of the home descended (artistically) either from Hals or from Rembrandt. Gerard Dou (1613-75), one of Rembrandt's many pupils, was the most successful painter financially of his day. He made his fortune by never progressing beyond the first manner of his master and by painting with a careful literalness which demanded no exercise of the beholder's imagination. "The Poulterer's Shop" (facing page 169) is a typical example of Dou's minutely finished style. It has always been popular because it

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"INTERIOR OF A DUTCH HOUSE," BY DE HOOCH

National Gallery, London.

The artist's joy in painting sunlight is delightfully expressed in his brilliantly lit interior. The figure standing before the fireplace is an afterthought added to improve the design of the grouping after the picture had been finished, and that is why the black and white tiling of the floor can be seen through the woman's skirt.

Photo: Bruckmann.

"THE BULL," BY PAUL POTTER (1625–54)

The Hague.

One of the earliest and most celebrated cattle-pictures in the world, Potter's "Bull" is a show-piece which delights farmers to-day as it did in the seventeenth century.

Photo: Hanfstaengl.

"RIVER SCENE," BY ALBERT CUYP (1620–91)

National Gallery, London.

The glowing light and golden colour of Cuyp's skies have placed him in the front rank of those painters who "set the sun in the heavens" In this picture we see how effectively he uses cows as dark spots which bring out the luminosity of the sky and lend enchantment to the distant horizon.

Photo: Bruckmann.

"THE PEARL NECKLACE," BY VERMEER

Berlin.

In this picture of a lady looking in a mirror to see how her necklace suits her, we are fascinated by the artist's rendering of light, which softly illumines every object in the scene. Vermeer, who has been described by Mr. E. V. Lucas as "The Perfect Painter," was neglected for two hundred years after his death, but to-day he is one of the most popular of the Old Masters and universally recognised to be one of the greatest colourists in art.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE MILL," BY JACOB VAN RUISDAEL (1628–82)

Amsterdam.

"His grave and solemn mind gives to the simplest and most commonplace of landscapes a look of sad importance, which is almost like a reproach of lightmindedness to any other man's work which happens to hang alongside."

is much easier to recognise industry than to understand inspiration, and in rendering this everyday incident in a shopping expedition Dou has spared no pains to render each detail with laborious fidelity.

Terborch

How even in the rendering of detail there is all the difference in the world between the Letter of Exactitude and the Spirit of Truth, may be seen when we compare the pictures of Dou with those of similar scenes by Terborch, De Hoogh, or Vermeer. Each one of these three exquisite painters has an eye for detail as keen as that possessed by Dou, but they all have far more ability than Dou possessed to subordinate details to the unity of the whole. The eldest of these three masters, Gerard Terborch or Terburg (1617-81), has already been mentioned. As a young man he studied at Haarlem, where he was probably influenced by Hals and Brouwer, but Terborch did not found his style only on what he found within the borders of Holland. He was more a man-of-the-world than most of his artist contemporaries. He visited England, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, and in the last country he certainly studied the paintings of Velazquez, who was only eighteen years his senior. Like Velazquez, but unlike most of his fellows in Holland, Terborch was aristocratic in the temper of his art, so that his pictures as a rule show us a higher strata of Dutch society than that depicted by the majority of Dutch artists.

Genre and its Meaning

Here it may be well to pause in order to emphasise the fact that these Dutch painters were preoccupied with rendering the *manners* of their time. This characteristic, which gives their work a lasting historical value, has caused their little pictures of courtyards, interiors, tavern scenes, conversations, toilet-scenes, and the like to be known as "genre" painting, from the French

word *genre* (i. e. manner or style). A few, like Terborch, show us the manner of dress and living of the upper classes; others show us the middle classes, and still more concern themselves with the manners of the peasants and lower classes. Among these last the best known is Jan Steen (1626-79), who is often amusingly satirical in his outlook; other painters of a similar style were Adrian van Ostade (1610-85) and the Fleming David Teniers (1610-90).

De Hooch

These painters may amuse us for the moment, but they do not hold us spellbound as some of the others do. The greatest rival of Terborch was Peter de Hooch or de Hoogh (1629-77), who was only twelve years his junior. De Hooch's figures may not be so aristocratic as those of Terborch, but they are seen as finely and have their being in the same clear light which both these masters observed and rendered so lovingly. This passion for the rendering of light began to show itself in the paintings of Brouwer; it becomes still more marked in the work of Terborch, and it approaches perfection in the pictures of De Hooch. His chief interest, as the late Sir Walter Armstrong remarked, "is always absorbed by the one problem, that of capturing and bottling the sunlight." How supremely well he succeeded in his object is shown by our illustration of "A Girl Reading" (facing page 170), a masterpiece of interior illumination, in which every object is not only perfectly rendered but keeps its proper distance within the room owing to the painter's delicately exact notation of the relative degrees of lighting.

In his youth, as Armstrong has pointed out, De Hooch liked the broadest daylight, but with advancing years he preferred "merely to suggest the outside sun, as it creeps down tiled passages, through red curtains and half-open shutters." An interesting example of De Hooch's earlier period when he chose the broadest daylight for his scene is the "Interior of a Dutch

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"HEAD OF A YOUNG GIRL," BY JAN VERMEER OF DELFT

The Hague

The Prince Painter" is the name Mr. L. V. Lang has given to the [illegible] Museum [illegible] This head is his masterpiece in portraiture.

House" (facing page 164). Nothing could be more brilliant or more faithful to nature than the bright sunlight which streams down on the group near the window. It is instructive to observe here that the standing figure by the fireplace was an afterthought put in by the artist to improve his design. This woman forms the apex of a triangle of which the wall with the windows forms the base. We know that she was an afterthought because the artist had already painted the black-and-white tiled floor right up to the fireplace before he began the figure, and that is why we can still see the tiling through the woman's skirt. This correction would not have been visible to De Hooch's contemporaries, but it is a peculiar property of oil paint that an underpainting, invisible when the paint is fresh, will in time work its way up to the surface. Since De Hooch was a consummate craftsman whose handling of pigment approached perfection, the fact that even he has been unable to disguise a correction is a useful lesson to a living painter that he must get his picture right from the start, or otherwise, however clever he may be, his errors will be found out after his death. In De Hooch's interior, this emergence of what it was endeavoured to hide is too trivial and unimportant to affect seriously the beauty and merit of the painting.

§ 2

Vermeer, "The Perfect Painter."

Jan van der Meer, commonly known as Vermeer of Delft (1632-75), is one of the Old Masters whom modern research has rescued from unmerited neglect. Houbraken, a historian who wrote only forty years after his death, does not even mention him, and for two centuries his name was almost forgotten and his paintings were sold as works by De Hooch, Terborch, Metsu, or even Rembrandt. Then in the middle of the nineteenth century a French exile named Thoré spent three years

(1858-60) studying records and archives in Holland and patiently searching out Vermeer's paintings. Since Thoré published his account of his studies, the fame of Vermeer has rapidly spread and increased. To-day he is one of the most costly and one of the most popular of the old masters.

Of his private life very little is known. Vermeer was three years younger than De Hooch, and fifteen years younger than Terborch. We know that as soon as he came of age in 1653 he married Catherine Bolenes and by her had eight children. He was evidently esteemed in his native city, for in 1662 and again in 1670 he was elected one of the principal officers of the Guild of St. Luke of Delft. But fame is one thing and fortune is another. When Vermeer died in 1675 he had nothing to leave his wife and family but twenty-six unsold pictures. If these were put into the market to-day they might fetch anything *over* a quarter of a million pounds—not a penny less—but there were no American millionaires in the seventeenth century: so poor Vermeer was judged to have died insolvent and his widow's affairs had to be put in the hands of a liquidator, who happened to be the naturalist Leeuwenhoek.

To explain in words the incomparable charm of Vermeer's painting is as simple and as difficult as to explain the beauty of light. The illumination in his pictures is as perfect as it is in the best works of De Hooch, and if the pictures of Vermeer are still more beautiful than those of De Hooch it is because Vermeer was a still finer and more subtle colourist. He was, indeed, one of the greatest colourists the world has ever known. He excelled in all subjects. His "Head of a Young Girl" (see Colour-Plate) is one of the loveliest portraits in the world. This young girl is not strikingly beautiful in herself. She has a sweet face, and Vermeer has brought out the sweetness of her disposition and the charm of her youth; but he has done more than this: by the loveliness of his colour—particularly by the contrast of the blue and lemon-yellow of which he was so fond—

Photo: Bruckmann.

"VIEW OF DELFT," BY VERMEER (1632–75)

The Hague.

The loveliest view of a town in art, this picture is exquisite in its quality of light and sense of airiness. Nothing could be more natural, more true to the thing seen.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE POULTERER'S SHOP," BY GERARD DOU (1613–75)

National Gallery, London.

A typical example of the precise, minutely finished style of this artist, a pupil of Rembrandt, who made his fortune by imitating the first manner of his master. Though Dou lacked imagination and dramatic grandeur his faithful rendering of everyday incidents makes him a valuable chronicler of the manners of his time.

Vermeer has made her a joy for ever. Colour of this lyrical beauty sings its own sweet song.

Vermeer's "View of Delft" (facing page 168), also at The Hague, is the loveliest street-scene or town view in art. It has the crystal purity of colour and limpid atmosphere of Delft itself, which a living writer has described as "the cleanest city in Europe, looking as if all the houses were thoroughly scrubbed down and polished each day before sunrise." Nothing could be more natural, more true to the thing seen, than this painting, yet nothing could be more perfect in every quality that goes to the making of a work of art.

These two pictures are exceptional even among the paintings of Vermeer, and when we come to consider his more numerous paintings of small figures in interiors, the richness he offers us makes selection embarrassing. It would be perilous to say "The Pearl Necklace" (facing page 164) is better than "The Milkmaid" or other pictures one could mention; but it is certainly one of the best and shows how Vermeer could compete with De Hooch in "bottling sunlight" and beat that master even at his own favourite game.

Vermeer's art undoubtedly affected his contemporaries, those of his own age as well as those who were his juniors. Gabriel Metsu (1630-67) sometimes comes near to Vermeer, and the colour of "The Letter Writer Surprised" in the Wallace Collection has a tenderness which is apt to make even a Terborch look a little hard. Metsu knows how to set his stage decoratively; his pictures are always sprightly; but his observation is less subtle, and his research into light and shade is not carried to the point of perfection reached by De Hooch and Vermeer.

Nicolas Maes (1632-93), another pupil of Rembrandt, though less gifted than Metsu, used to be thought of chiefly as a portrait-painter, but is now much esteemed for the anecdotal pictures he painted in his youth. "The Idle Servant" (facing

page 174) is an amusing example of his work in this style, and shows both his own powers of observation and what he learnt from Rembrandt in the way of using lighting to enhance a dramatic effect. But if we look critically at the picture, say at the cat stealing the plucked bird, or at the whole area of the tiled floor, we shall have to admit that in drawing Maes was inferior to Dou, and in illumination far inferior to De Hooch or Vermeer. All these subject pictures were painted between 1655 and 1665, after which date circumstances drove Maes into "pot-boiling" portraiture.

§ 3

We have seen now with what variety and perfection the Dutch artists painted their national hearthside; and next we must consider how they painted their homeland. Midway between the genre painters and the landscape painters stands Aart van der Neer (1603-77), who forms a bridge, as it were, between the two groups. Born three years before Rembrandt, he, like Jan van Goyen (1596-1656), is one of the early pioneers of landscape painting, yet by the little figures in his landscapes he tells us a great deal of the life of Holland. Thus his "Skating Sene" (facing page 171) in the Wallace Collection has been ranked by the famous Dr. Bode as "among the most perfect landscape delineations of winter," but it is also a charming picture-of-manners giving us a glimpse of the life on the ice in seventeenth-century Holland.

Towards the end of his life Aart van der Neer deteriorated, as other "Little Masters" did also; in addition to painting, he kept a tavern, and possibly business losses in the wine-trade drove him to do inferior but more immediately salable work during his last years. Nearly all his best work was done before 1665, when he was not dependent on painting for a livelihood, but a happy amateur who could paint what he liked. He was

Photo: Bruckmann.

"A GIRL READING," BY DE HOOCH (1629–77)

Munich.

Whatever his subject, de Hooch was absorbed by one problem, that of "capturing and bottling the sunlight." Compare this masterpiece of illumination with Dou's picture facing page 169, and it will be seen how Dou's details appear hard and unsympathetic, while every object in de Hooch's interior is soft and atmospheric owing to the greater subtlety of his lighting.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"A SKATING SCENE," BY VAN DER NEER (1603–77)

Wallace Collection, London.

One of the "most perfect landscape delineations of winter," this picture also illustrates the life of Holland in times of frost when the canals and rivers become highways for the traffic of the country.

one of the first artists to attempt painting night scenes, but though the novelty of his moonlit views attracted attention his winter landscapes in daylight are usually considered to be his best work.

Agriculture has always been an important industry in Holland, and the local artists who catered so well for the needs of the citizen did not forget to make an appeal also to the farmers. Of many who made a specialty of painting cattle, Paul Potter (1625-54) is the most celebrated, though he died in his twenty-ninth year. His big picture of "The Bull" (facing page 165) is a favourite show-piece at The Hague, where guides—most conservative critics—wax enthusiastic about its accuracy. Courageous people, however, have been known to confess that they find its precise statement of fact a little dull, though few dare to be so severe as Dr. Muther, who once described Potter's cattle as "essentially Dutch, for they know neither passions, nor struggles, nor movement, but chew the cud phlegmatically or lie down in comfortable repose."

Cuyp

Cattle also figure largely in the paintings of Albert Cuyp (1620-91), who is splendidly represented in English collections. Cuyp was no mere animal-painter: his principal interest lay neither in the beast nor in the earth, but above in the mighty vault of the heavens. He does not so much set out to paint cattle as to *use* cattle, and we may see in his "River Scene" (facing page 165) how effectively cows can be used as dark spots which bring out by contrast the luminosity of the sky, and as prominent objects in the foreground which emphasise the great stretch of flat landscape which reaches out to the horizon. The glowing light and golden colour of Cuyp have placed him among the great sky-painters of the world, and his work has for centuries been an example and an incentive to British landscape painting.

Ruisdael

Apart from all other Dutch painters of landscape—seeming, indeed, to belong to another race—stands the austere and majestic figure of Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-82). Though he took all nature for his province and in his youth painted her more peaceful aspects, we instinctively associate his sublime spirit with holy spots "both savage and enchanted." It is difficult to think of him as eight years younger than Cuyp, for so serious and austere is his vision that we can hardly believe Ruisdael was ever young. Even when he paints a simple seaside scene like "The Shore at Scheveningen" (facing page 172) he gives dramatic intensity to the scene by the rolling clouds in the sky which seem to repeat the restlessness of the agitated waves. Again, in his famous painting of "The Mill" (facing page 165), for all the stillness of the scene, we feel that this is the calm before the storm—as, indeed, the sky betokens. Grandly designed as this painting is, it is one of the quietest works of the artist, who though infinitely varied in his choice of subject, delighted especially in painting waterfalls, cascades, and rocky cliffs. Ruisdael, says a gifted American painter, Mr. John La Farge,

> is as different from Cuyp as shadow is from sunshine; and his grave and solemn mind gives to the simplest and most commonplace of landscapes a look of sad importance, which is almost like a reproach of lightmindedness to any other man's work which happens to hang alongside.

Hobbema

Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709) was Ruisdael's pupil and friend, but as different in temperament from his master as a man could well be. Ruisdael approaches Nature with the devoutness of a worshipper approaching a shrine; Hobbema, with the unconscious ease of a man entering his own home. He painted the same subjects over and over again, but he painted them so naturally, so freshly and convincingly, that they take

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE SHORE AT SCHEVENINGEN," BY RUISDAEL

National Gallery, London.

Scheveningen to-day is a fashionable watering-place, but this beautiful picture shows it as it was 250 years ago, when the majesty of nature was undisturbed by the villadom of Man.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE AVENUE," BY HOBBEMA (1638–1709)

National Gallery, London

The most popular landscape in the National Gallery, this masterpiece expresses the joy and thankfulness of all [illegible] bright sunlit and fruit-country life. Poor all his genius Hobbema could not earn his living by painting, and at thirty he had to take a small position in the Civil Service.

us straight back to nature, not to the pictures of another artist. In the humbleness and sincerity of his naturalism he expresses everybody's feeling of delight and thankfulness in sunny weather and fresh country air. "The Avenue" (facing page 173) is probably the best beloved landscape in the National Gallery, London, and this and other works by Hobbema have had a profound and far-reaching effect on British landscape. Out of his smiling and friendly art grew our Norwich school of landscape. Gainsborough acknowledged his worth by word and deed, and the last sentence ever uttered by John Crome was, "Oh Hobbema, my dear Hobbema, how I have loved you!" It is sad to think that this simple, honest, and most easily understood painter, a man of genius who has given happiness to millions for six generations, fared so poorly in his profession of painting that when he was thirty he sought another means of livelihood. He sought and obtained a small position in the wine-customs, and thus made himself independent of picture-buyers and dealers. He saw his master the great painter Ruisdael battling with poverty and becoming no more prosperous as the years rolled on, so Hobbema wisely determined to look elsewhere for his bread-and-butter and make landscape painting his hobby and pastime. It is significant to note that his supreme masterpiece, "The Avenue," was painted some years after he had become a civil servant, and when, without having to think of what the buyer might or might not like, he could indulge to the full his feeling for the pattern in landscape and his sense of beauty in the elements of nature.

It must be admitted that if Holland had a galaxy of artistic talent during the seventeenth century she did little to encourage genius. As so often happens in modern times, the mediocre painters made the best income, while the men of genius starved. This state of affairs is not satisfactory, but it is not inexplicable. The men who prospered and made money were, as a rule, painters like Gerard Dou who painted every feather on a bird, every

scale of a fish, the shine of a copper pan, and the lustre of an earthenware pot. These were things within the range of everybody's observation and interest, and demanded no imagination, no culture. Therefore the painters of pots and pans, of insects, fruit and flowers, all prospered, while great artists like Rembrandt, Hals, Vermeer, and Ruisdael, who concentrated their attention on higher things, were neglected. Anybody could understand a picture of a cat stealing a fish, but to appreciate the beauty of pearly light stealing through high windows to lighten an apartment, presupposes some sense of poetry in the mind of the beholder.

§ 4

The Sea Painters

All classifications of so individual a thing as art are bound to be artificial and imperfect; but just as we may say that the genre painters of Holland depicted the life of the city, and the landscape painters the life of the country, so a third group of artists mirrored another phase of national activity in constituting themselves painters of shipping and the sea. Holland, as England once knew to her cost, was, and still is, a great maritime nation, and her sea-captains and ship-owners inevitably set up a demand for pictures of the element on which they triumphed and prospered. Moreover, this low-lying land was at the mercy of the sea, which was only kept back by the dykes, so that every Dutchman may be said to have had a personal interest in the ocean. One of the earliest painters of sea-pieces with shipping was Hendrik Dubbels (1620-76), who was the master of a more famous sea-painter. Ludolf Bakhuizen (1631-1708). Bakhuizen is as much a painter of shipping as of the sea, and in addition to being a picture-painter he was a naval architect who made constructive drawings of ships for the Russian Tsar Peter the Great. There is a great deal of spirit in his sea-pieces,

Photo W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE IDLE SERVANT," BY NICOLAS MAES (1632–93)

National Gallery, London.

An amusing example of this artist's powers of humorous observation. Maes was a pupil of Rembrandt and enjoyed a considerable vogue as a portrait-painter, though his drawing was not equal to Dou's, and his illumination is far less perfect than that of de Hooch or Vermeer.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"A GALE," BY WILLEM VAN DE VELDE (1633–1707)

National Gallery, London.

"It was in Holland that marine painting first began to play an important part, for the sea was both the glory and the menace of this low-lying naval power." By a strange freak of fortune Van de Velde, born in the country of De Ruyter, came in England in later life as marine painter to Charles II. He died at Greenwich after his own countryman William of Orange had ascended the throne of England.

particularly in his tempestuous subjects, but his storms, as John Ruskin pointed out, were storms that belonged to melodrama rather than to Nature.

Van de Velde

We do not feel, however, that there is anything theatrical in the marines of his far greater contemporary, Willem van de Velde the Younger (1633-1707), who belonged to a famous family of artists settled in Amsterdam. Some critics hold that the younger Van de Velde is at his best when depicting shipping in a calm, and assuredly he has painted the stillness of the sea with a beauty and true dignity which go straight to the heart of every sailor. But there are pictures also in which Van de Velde has portrayed crashing waters under a charged sky, and if he rarely essayed to express the terrors of a great storm, yet he succeeds perfectly in conveying the excitement and somewhat perilous exhilaration of a stiff breeze. An example of his powers in this direction is "A Gale" (facing page 175), in which we see the waves washing over a fishing-smack in the foreground, while further on a frigate proudly approaches with bellying sails, and still further in the distance a second frigate rides out the gale at anchor beneath the dark clouded sky. This gale is not awe-inspiring, as it might have been had Ruisdael painted it, but it is a picture that instinctively makes us square our chests and brace ourselves to meet the wind. Both the Willem van de Veldes, the father and the son who soon surpassed him in accomplishment, came over to London in 1677 and entered the service of Charles II. Willem van de Velde the Younger died at Greenwich, and owing to his long sojourn in England his pictures are plentiful in our public galleries, where they have served as models for Turner and other British sea-painters.

Painting, so flourishing in Holland at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was dead or dying when the next century dawned. The rapid rise of art to the eminence attained by Rem-

brandt was followed by an equally rapid decadence, so that in the early years of the eighteenth century Dutch painting, while maintaining a creditable level of craftsmanship, had sunk to the meticulous and uninspired painting of fruit, flowers, and the odd collections of inanimate objects known as "still-life." In the Netherlands the vein of Rubens was now exhausted, and his true heir appeared in France in the person of that strangely attractive painter, Antoine Watteau.

XI

THE RISE OF FRENCH PAINTING

THE RISE OF FRENCH PAINTING

THE ART OF WATTEAU, CHARDIN, BOUCHER, FRAGONARD, AND GREUZE

§ 1

COMING events in the world of politics cast their shadows before them on the field of art, and as soon as we begin to study closely the national painting of France during the seventeenth and succeeding century, we become conscious of two streams of tradition, one democratic and derived from the Low Countries, the other aristocratic and inspired by Italy.

These two French schools of painting, which mirror respectively the life of the nobles and the life of the peasants, give us warning of that sharp division of the classes which were afterwards to meet and mingle in the clash and conflict of the French Revolution.

The seventeenth century, which in its beginning and middle period had seen art flourishing in Holland with the rise of the Dutch Republic, witnessed towards its close the shifting of political interest from Holland to France, and the rapid growth and development of a group of artists who added to the glory of the court of Louis XIV. Although France had given birth to artists of considerable distinction long before the end of the seventeenth century, it was not till the reign of the Grand Monarch that she evolved a distinct national style of her own.

The French Primitives

The earlier French painters were almost wholly under the influence first of Flanders and then of Italy. Thus Jean Clouet, who in 1516 was appointed Court Painter to King François I, was the son of a Brussels artist, and both he and his son François Clouet (*c.* 1510-72), who succeeded him, carried on a Flemish tradition. Though the feminine grace of the drawing of the Clouets has been held to be characteristic of France, yet the style of both artists was so close to that of their great contemporary Holbein that it can hardly be accepted as distinctly national.

Flemish again in character was the work of the three brothers Le Nain—Antoine and Louis, who both died in 1648, and Matthieu, died 1667—who came from Laon and settled in Paris. The gentle seriousness of their paintings of rustics foreshadows the peasant masterpieces of Jean François Millet. They are the ancestors of the democratic painters of France. Another painter closely associated with the age of Louis XIV, Philippe de Champaigne (1602-74), who painted numerous portraits of Cardinal Richelieu, was actually born in Brussels, though he established himself in Paris at the early age of nineteen. His portraiture with its clear outline and suave colouring is also northern rather than southern in character.

Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and Claude le Lorrain (1600-82) were great masters whose innovations left an indelible impress on landscape painting—the development of which will be traced in a subsequent chapter—but though born in France, both of them spent the greater part of their lives in Rome. Their art belongs to Europe generally rather than to France. The portrait-painter Pierre Mignard (1610-95) and his great rival Charles Le Brun (1619-90), who as architect and sculptor as well as painter dominated the Louis Quatorze period, were both trained in Rome and entirely Italian in style.

None of these men was strong enough to found a distinct and national French style; and the kind of painting which we

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE CONVERSATION," BY ANTOINE WATTEAU (1683–1721)

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Conceived in a poetical spirit, in spite of the artificial atmosphere of the mock pastoral style of his day, this typical example of Watteau's art enchants us by the exquisite precision of his observation, the light brilliancy of his colour, and the gentle melancholy which pervades even the fairyland of his creation.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"LADY AT HER TOILET," BY WATTEAU

Wallace Collection, London.

Unique as the "Venus" of Velazquez, this picture is held by many to be the most beautiful Watteau ever painted. Though almost directly inspired by the figure paintings of Rubens, which Watteau studied at the Luxembourg, this charming little painting is exquisite in its grace and refinement.

look upon to-day as being essentially and characteristically French was not born till Antoine Watteau left his home in Valenciennes for Paris. It was this weakling, whose frail form was prematurely ravaged by consumption, who founded the greatest and strongest of all the modern schools of painting.

Watteau

Antoine Watteau was born in 1683 at Valenciennes, near the Franco-Flemish frontier. His father, a tiler and carpenter, was in poor circumstances, and the boy is said to have had an unhappy childhood. Watteau senior bore the reputation of being a hard man, and wanted his son to become a tiler like himself, and when young Antoine at last obtained permission to study in the studio of a local artist, one Guérin, who was painter to the municipality of Valenciennes, the father refused to pay the expenses of his son's education.

After the death of Guérin in 1702, Antoine Watteau, then aged nineteen, ran away to Paris with a scene-painter called Metayer. But when they had arrived in Paris, this man soon abandoned his young companion when he had no more work to give him, and henceforward Watteau, already in delicate health and disowned by his father, was alone in Paris, without money, clothes, or resources of any kind. In desperate poverty he at last found employment in a wretched workshop where cheap religious pictures were produced by the dozen to be retailed by country shopkeepers. Nowadays chromolithographs have saved artists from this kind of drudgery, but in the early eighteenth century even the lowest-priced coloured card had to be done by hand. What was required of Watteau and his fellow-labourers was rapidity of execution in making copies of popular subjects, and for this work the pay was the equivalent of half-a-crown a week and one daily meal of soup!

Yet even in this miserable trade Watteau managed to distinguish himself, and was entrusted with the reproduction of a

"St. Nicholas" that was in great demand. One day the mistress of the workshop forgot to give Watteau the "St. Nicholas" to copy, and remembering her oversight later in the day, she climbed up to Watteau's attic to scold him for idling. After she had worked herself up into a passion, Watteau amazed her by showing her his day's work, a perfect St. Nicholas which he had completely finished from memory.

Through all this period of drudgery and semi-starvation, Watteau never despaired and snatched every opportunity to improve his art, drawing from nature at night and during his rare holidays and leisure moments. Then by a happy chance he made the acquaintance of the decorative artist Claude Gillot, who, after seeing Watteau's drawings, invited the young man to live with him.

Rescued from his miserable factory Watteau worked with enthusiasm at the ornamental painting of his new friend, who was then chiefly engaged in representing scenes from Italian comedy. Watteau, who in his poverty and ill-health worshipped elegance and all the graces of life, soon rivalled and surpassed his tutor in painting slim Harlequins, simple Pierrots, dainty Columbines, and other well-defined characters of Italian comedy; and it may be that Gillot grew jealous of his *protégé*. After a period of warm friendship, the two artists parted on bad terms, and though Watteau in after life never ceased to praise Gillot's pictures, he kept silent about the man and would never answer when questioned about the breach between them. Gillot, on the other hand, tacitly acknowledged his pupil's superiority, for some time after the quarrel he abandoned painting and devoted himself to etching.

When Watteau left Gillot, his fellow-assistant, Nicolas Lancret (1690-1743), who afterwards became his pupil, left with him, and both young men found employment with Claude Audran, a painter of ornaments who was also a guardian of the Luxembourg Palace. This stay with Audran had a profound

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE SWING," BY FRAGONARD (1732–1806)

Wallace Collection, London.

In this picture we have an example of that affectation of rustic simplicity which thinly veiled the real sensual character of Court life at Versailles. After squandering his great artistic gifts on pandering to the taste of a depraved nobility, the greatest decorator of his age lived to see his patrons sent to the guillotine, and though the painter himself escaped the worst horrors of the French Revolution he died in poverty.

Photo: T. & R. Annan.

"THE PANCAKE-MAKER," BY CHARDIN (1699–1779)

Hunterian Museum, Glasgow.

Unmoved by the affectations of his age and the artificialities of the French Court, this great artist painted humble scenes of domesticity with a penetration that divined their innermost truths and with a perfection of workmanship that invested them with beauty.

influence on the art of Watteau. There were no gardens of the Luxembourg in those days, and the park attached to the royal palace was full of wild and natural beauty which appealed to the young artist, and drew forth his powers as a landscape painter. It was here that he discovered and learnt to paint those noble clumps of trees which form the background to the figures of his idylls and pastorals.

Inspired thus by the externals of the palace, Watteau was also profoundly moved by what was within, the picture-gallery containing the series of great paintings by Rubens which illustrated the life of Marie de Médicis. Watteau viewed these spirited paintings again and again; he copied them with zest, and became so saturated with Rubens that eventually he was able to deflect his fellow-countrymen from Italian ideals and revivify French painting with the vigorous realism of Rubens. His worship of the great Fleming, to whom he felt himself related by ties of race as well as artistic sympathy, never degenerated into servile imitation: "by means of a gradually widening realism," says the distinguished French critic M. Camille Mauclair, Watteau "arrived at the point of preserving in his small canvasses all Rubens' admirable breadth, while achieving a masterly originality of grouping." A superb example of Watteau's powers in this respect is his exquisite "Lady at her Toilet" (facing page 181) in the Wallace Collection. Here a theme, in which Rubens could hardly have avoided a certain coarseness, becomes a model of grace and refinement.

Once again the jealousy of a senior threatened Watteau's progress. Watteau showed his master a realistic painting of soldiers on the march, and Audran, who naturally did not want to lose so talented an assistant, advised him not to paint realistic pictures lest he should lose his skill as a decorator. But Watteau, determined to devote himself to original work was now diplomat enough to avoid a quarrel, and desirous of leaving Audran courteously, he informed him that he must return to Valen-

ciennes to visit his family. At Valenciennes the young artist continued his studies of nature and contemporary life, and he painted a series of military pictures illustrating camp-life, marches, and outpost duty. But after staying there long enough to justify his visit, he returned to Paris, where he was now not altogether unknown.

At this time his great desire was to win the Prix de Rome and to visit Italy, and with this object he competed in 1709, the subject set by the Academy being "David Granting Abigail Nabal's Pardon." The prize, however, was won by a student named Grison, Watteau being placed second and thus losing his opportunity of visiting Rome.

Still desirous of studying in Italy, and still hopeful that the Academy might help him to accomplish his desire, Watteau three years later contrived to get two of his military pictures hung in a room through which Academicians were in the habit of passing. Several admired the "vigorous colouring, and a certain harmony which made them appear the work of an old master," and one Academician, de la Fosse by name, made inquiries as to the painter. It was then discovered that this young painter, already twenty-nine, was so modest that all he wanted from the Academy was its influence with the King that he might receive a small grant to enable him to study in Italy.

Elected to the French Academy

Attracted by his talent and modesty, M. de la Fosse sought an interview with Watteau which had the most surprising results. With a rare generosity the Academician told the young man that he had no need to seek instruction in Italy, that he undervalued his own ability, and the Academicians believed he was already capable of doing them honour; in short, he had only to take the proper steps to be accepted a member of their society. The young artist did as he was told, and was immediately received as a member of the French Academy.

MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR, BY BOUCHER (1703–1770)

Wallace Collection, London.

This notorious favourite of the King of France possessed an unerring instinct for beauty, and during the twenty years of her reign she exerted a great and, on the whole, a beneficial influence on the arts. "Her death in 1764," says Lady Dilke, "deprived the great group of artists employed by the Crown of a court of appeal whose decisions were ruled by a taste finished to the point of genius."

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

PORTRAIT OF AN ACTRESS ("LA BELLE GRECQUE"), BY LANCRET (1690–1743)

Wallace Collection, London.

This superb portrait of an actress shows that in one quality, that of dramatic force, Lancret surpassed his master Watteau. We can almost hear this graceful creature recite her lines, and her gesture is eloquent of the point she has turned to make.

In all the long and memorable history of the Academy of France no incident similar to this has ever been recorded. That a young artist without friends or fortune, who had failed to win the Prix de Rome and humbly begged for help in his studies, should spontaneously and unanimously be elected an Academician, is a miracle without precedent or sequel in the history of all Academies. This unique event was the turning-point in Watteau's career, and henceforward his fame was assured and he was able to earn his living in comfort.

It was on August 28, 1717, that Watteau was definitely admitted to the Academy. All successful candidates are required to deposit a diploma work after their election, and it was for this purpose that Watteau eventually painted his famous masterpiece, "L'Embarquement pour Cythère," which is now in the Louvre. In this poetically conceived picture, which shows a crowd of gallant youths and fair maidens about to embark for the legendary isle of perfect love, Watteau revealed a science of colour harmony which was one hundred and fifty years ahead of his day. He had already excited the admiration of his contemporaries by a method of painting which was as successful as it was original. He would cover his canvas copiously and, to all appearance, vaguely with a thick layer of pigment, and on this he would proceed, so to speak, to *chisel* out his detail. Figures, sky, and landscape background were then built up by a series of minute touches, which gave his pictures a peculiarly vibrating and scintillating effect. His division of tones and his wonderful orchestration of complementary colours make Watteau a forerunner of the prismatic colouring of the more scientific painters of the nineteenth century.

Unfortunately he was not destined to enjoy long the fame and fortune which now awaited him. The privation and hardship of his early manhood had undermined his always frail constitution and left him a prey to phthisis.

As if he knew the end was approaching he worked feverishly

during his last years. For a time he lived with a wealthy collector named Crozat, for whose dining-room he painted a set of "The Four Seasons." Though very comfortable at M. Crozat's house, which was filled with precious things and with paintings and drawings by old masters he admired, a desire for more complete independence led Watteau to leave it and live with his friend Vleughels, who afterwards became Principal of the Academy at Rome. In 1718 he left Vleughels, and shut himself up in a small apartment alone with his dreams and his illness, displaying then that craving for solitude which is said to be one of the symptoms of phthisis. Later, somebody having spoken well of England, he suddenly had an almost morbid longing to cross the Channel.

In 1719 he came to London, where he painted and had some success, till the climate made him ill and unable to work. He returned to France more exhausted and weaker in health than he had ever been before, but slightly recovered during a six months' stay with his friend the art-dealer Gersaint, for whom he painted a sign, an exquisitely finished interior with figures, in the short space of eight mornings—he was still so weak that he could only paint half the day. Then, hoping that he might recover his strength in the country, a house at Nogent was lent to him, but there his health rapidly declined and he gave himself up to religion, his last picture being a Crucifixion for the curate of the parish. Still pathetically hopeful that change of air might do him good, he begged his friend Gersaint to make arrangements for him to journey to Valenciennes. But while waiting for strength to move to his native town the end came, and on July 18, 1721, he died suddenly in Gersaint's arms. He was only thirty-seven years old.

The real sweetness and generosity of Watteau's nature is well illustrated by a touching incident during the last months of his life. His pupil Jean Pater (1696–1736) had offended him, as Lancret had also done, by imitating his own style and sub-

jects too closely, and in a fit of ill-temper he dismissed him from his studio. But during his last illness Watteau remembered how he had suffered in his youth from the jealousy of his seniors, and he reproached himself with having been unjust as well as unkind to Patèr. He besought his friend Gersaint to persuade Pater to return to him, and when the latter arrived the dying man spent a month giving Pater all the help and guidance that he could in order to atone for his former injustice.

Pater, though possessed of less individuality than Lancret, was in many respects the best of Watteau's followers, and like his master he also died young. He was haunted by a fear that he would become old and helpless before he had saved enough to live upon, and he worked so incessantly and feverishly to gain his independence that eventually his health broke down and he died in harness at forty.

Lancret, who lived on till 1743, continued Watteau's Italian comedy manner and had considerable success with his theatrical portraits, two of which are in the Wallace Collection. He is seen at his best in the portrait of an actress known as "La Belle Grecque" (facing page 185), which has a vivacious charm of its own and is full of life. The pose of the figure is particularly happy and conveys admirably a sense of movement. But while they could imitate more or less cleverly the superficial appearance of Watteau's pictures, neither Lancret nor Pater were able to give their paintings that undercurrent of pathos which lifts Watteau's work high above the trivial.

Only a very superficial observer of Watteau's pictures would accuse him of being a painter of frivolities, a chronicler of picnics. Watteau lived in an artificial age, and being a true artist he could not help reflecting something of its artificiality. The French Court life of his day had the splendour of autumn leaves about to fall. Watteau, himself a dainty rose with canker in the bud, shows us the hectic charm of a civilisation already being consumed by mortal malady; but his honesty and intel-

lectual insight prevented him from pretending that the happiness of his puppets was anything more than a passing moment of self-deception. His pictures haunt us, not because of their gaiety, but by reason of their gentle, uncomplaining melancholy; and the late Sir Frederick Wedmore penetrated to the secret of Watteau when he laid stress on "the reflective pathos, the poignant melancholy, which are among the most appealing gifts of him who was accounted the master of the frivolous, of the monotonously gay."

Watteau is unique in his qualities of drawing and colour. There have been many painters who were great draughtsmen, and a number of painters who have been great colourists; but those who were supreme both in drawing and colour we can count on the fingers of one hand. Watteau is among them. If we look at the little figures in a typical Watteau like "The Conversation" (facing page 180), we perceive that the drawing rivals that of Raphael in its perfection of form and that of Rembrandt in its expressiveness. Watteau's powers of drawing may be studied still further in his chalk drawings in the British Museum Print Room.

As for his paint, hardly among his predecessors will you find anything so exquisite in colour and so jewel-like in quality. The brightness of his palette, and the little touches with which he laid on his colour, make his pictures vibrate and sing as those of no other artist had done before. Watteau was not only a great master; he was one of those pioneer artists whose original research and brilliant achievements have given a new impetus to the art of painting.

§ 2

While Watteau was laying the foundations for the romantic and impressionist painting of modern France, another group of French figure painters were evolving a national "grand style"

for French portraiture. This new style first made its appearance when Largillière began painting Louis XIV and his family, and a typical example of it may be found in the Wallace Collection.

Nicolas Largillière (1656-1746), who was nearly thirty years older than Watteau, was born in Paris, but worked for many years in London, where he was an assistant to Sir Peter Lely and a great favourite with King Charles II. But unlike his master Lely—who rivalled the Vicar of Bray in keeping in with both sides—Largillière was a Royalist through and through, and like the fallen Stuarts he returned to France and made Paris his home during the latter part of his life. His drawing is accurate but rather hard, his colour harmonious and lighter in hue than that of his predecessors Mignard and Le Brun, and his great canvas at the Wallace Collection of Louis XIV with the Dauphin, the Duc de Bourgogne, the infant Duc d'Anjou (afterwards Louis XV), and Madame de Maintenon, shows how magnificently he could stage and present a royal group.

Among his contemporaries were Hyacinth Rigaud (1659–1743), and his pupil Jean Baptiste Oudry (1686–1755), who won much fame as superintendent of the royal tapestry manufactories of the Gobelins and Beauvais; but his most famous successor was Jean Marc Nattier (1685–1766), a Parisian-born who became one of the favourite portrait-painters at the Court of Louis XV. Nattier commenced his career as a historical painter, and only took up portraiture in 1720 after he had lost all his savings through the speculations of John Law, the Scottish financier and adventurer. His paintings are also a little hard, but they are light and gay in colour and remarkably stately in their grouping and arrangement.

Boucher

Another Paris-born artist acquired still wider fame. This was François Boucher (1703–70), who gained the first prize at

the Academy when he was only twenty years old and afterwards studied in Rome. "No one," wrote the late Lady Dilke of this artist, "ever attacked a greater variety of styles; his drawings—often extremely good—are to be met with in every important collection. Innumerable were his easel pictures, his mural decorations, his designs for tapestries at Beauvais or the Gobelins, his scene paintings for Versailles and the Opera."

No artist more completely illustrates and represents French taste in the eighteenth century than François Boucher, who was indeed the leader of fashion in this direction and by his creative genius brought a new note into European painting. He introduced a lighter and gayer scheme of colour into tapestries and decorative paintings, pale blues and pinks being predominant in his colour-schemes. He designed many paintings and decorations for the famous Madame de Pompadour, and the sweet colour now generally known as *rose du Barry* was invented by Boucher and was originally called *Rose Pompadour.*

To do justice to the French portraiture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, we must remember the ornate gilt furniture of the period with which they were surrounded. Portraits like Nattier's "Mademoiselle de Clermont" and Boucher's "Marquise de Pompadour" (facing page 184) —both of which are in the Wallace Collection—must not be judged as easel paintings, but as items in an elaborate scheme of interior decoration. There is nothing like them in the history of portraiture, just as there never was a Court exactly like that of the "Grand Monarch" or of his immediate successors. These portraits reconvey to us all the splendours of Versailles, its luxury and its heartlessness. They are the quintessence of aristocratic feeling, so full of culture that there is little room for humanity. The pride they express ends by alienating our sympathy, for they are the most pompous pictures the world has ever seen.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"GIRL WITH DOVES," BY GREUZE (1725–1805)

Wallace Collection, London.

Though she appears the incarnation of sweet innocence and simplicity, the original of this portrait broke Greuze's heart by her infidelities and eventually robbed him of his savings. She was the daughter of a Paris bookseller. The artist married her in haste, and by his paintings made her a reigning beauty of her day.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

MLLE. SOPHIE ARNOULD, BY GREUZE

Wallace Collection, London.

No artist owes so much of his fame to the beauty of his models as Greuze did, but it must be admitted that he knew how to present them to advantage and to paint them with a rare tenderness and atmospheric softness. He also, like Fragonard, outlived his popularity and died in poverty.

§ 3

Chardin

Side by side with these aristocratic painters whose art reflected the temper of the French Court, we find now and then an artist of genius who expresses the life and feelings of the people. The greatest of these was Jean Baptiste Simeon Chardin (1699-1779), who was also born in Paris. Though he worked for a time under the Court painter Van Loo at Fontainebleau, and was elected a member of the Academy in 1728, Chardin was never a favourite with the nobles of France, nor did he make any effort to pander to their taste. His pictures, like those of his predecessors the brothers Le Nain, were "tainted with democracy," and the intense humanity of Chardin links him to his great contemporary on the other side of the Channel, William Hogarth.

Though Chardin, as Lady Dilke once said, "treated subjects of the humblest and most unpretentious class, he brought to their rendering, not only deep feeling and a penetration which divines the innermost truths of the simplest forms of life, but a perfection of workmanship by which everything he handled was clothed with beauty."

Like the Persian poet Chardin could compose a song about a loaf of bread and a glass of red wine—as his beautiful still-life in the National Gallery, London, proves—while "The Pancake-Maker" (facing page 183) shows what beauty and tenderness he could find in the kitchen.

Amid all the artificiality of the gaudy Court of Versailles, Chardin stands out as the supreme interpreter of the sweetness and sane beauty of domesticity. He was a poet with the unspoilt heart of a child who could reveal to us the loveliness in the common things of life.

Fragonard

How strong a character Chardin must have been to resist the current of the time and adhere unswervingly to his simple

democratic ideals, we realise when we contemplate the talent and career of Jean Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806), who was for a time his pupil. We have only to look at Fragonard's charming domestic scene, "The Happy Mother," in the National Gallery, London, to see that this artist also might have been a painter of the people. He shows us here the home of a blacksmith, whose forge is seen in the background, while in the centre the young mother with her three children sits at a table, and beyond another woman rocks a cradle.

For good or ill Fragonard chose another path, and after he had gained from Chardin a knowledge of sound craftsmanship which he never afterwards lost, he chose a more fashionable master and became the pupil of Boucher. In 1752 at the age of twenty he won the Prix de Rome, and in 1756 he went for four years to Italy, where he made a particular study of the decorative paintings of "The Last of the Venetians," namely, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1769). He returned to Paris in 1761 and almost immediately became a favourite with the French nobility.

In Fragonard, wrote Lady Dilke, "Boucher found his true heir. The style of Court fashions and customs, highly artificial even in the affectation of nature and simplicity, the temper of society, purely sensual in spite of pretensions to sentiment, gave birth to innumerable fictions which took their place in the commerce of ordinary life. Eternal youth, perpetual pleasure, and all the wanton graces, their insincere airs masked by a voluptuous charm, came into seeming—a bright deceitful vision which cheated and allured all eyes. . . . The hours float by in waves of laughter, and the scent of flowers which breathe of endless summer fills the air. Existence in the gardens of Fragonard is pleasure; its penalties and pains are ignored, just as sickness and sorrow were then ignored in actual life."

Highly typical of the period and of the manner in which Fragonard catered for the taste of his patrons in his picture

"HEAD OF A GIRL LOOKING UP," BY GREUZE

National Gallery, London.

A beautiful example of one of the many fanciful portraits of his lovely but erring wife, by which this artist has attained world-wide fame and popularity.

"The Swing" (facing page 182), painted to order and exhibiting all the characteristics which Lady Dilke has so brilliantly analysed in the passage quoted. The workmanship is beautiful, the drawing and colour are alike charming, but these displays of so-called "gallantry" are detestable to many people, and through it all we are conscious of the insincerity of a clever and highly gifted painter.

Pictures which Fragonard painted purely to please himself, like "The Happy Mother" and the "Lady Carving her Name," a tiny canvas which cost Lord Hertford £1,400 in 1865, are less typical of Fragonard, but often pleasanter to gaze upon than his commissions and elaborate decorations. But even in these subjects Fragonard is always frolicsome and playful where Chardin was serious and earnest, and it is impossible to escape the conclusion that Fragonard's was essentially a shallow nature.

For all his cleverness he paid the penalty of his insincerity; he outlived his popularity and ultimately died in dire poverty. In 1806 the times had changed: Napoleon and the French Revolution had swept away the frivolities of Versailles.

§ 4

Greuze

Contemporary with Fragonard was a painter who, though never the equal of Chardin as a craftsman, nevertheless approached him in the democratic temper of his art. Jean Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805), who was born near Macon and came to Paris in 1746, suddenly acquired fame and popularity when he was thirty by exhibiting at the Salon of 1755 his picture "A Father Explaining the Bible to his Family." This familiar scene with its everyday details and its personages taken from humble life, made an immediate appeal to the bourgeois, who found in it those new ideas of simplicity and morality which Jean Jacques Rousseau had spread among the middle classes. Lady Dilke, who evidently suspected the moral sincerity of

Greuze, pronounced his pictures to be "stained by artificiality." His pictures were rendered attractive, she argued, by "a vein of wanton suggestion which found an echo in the dainty disorder in which his heroines are dressed."

There are some strange parallels between the life of Greuze and that of Watteau, who died four years before his birth. Greuze's father was also a carpenter, and he also opposed his son's determination to become an artist. Greuze also began his career in extreme poverty, but fortunately he had a more robust constitution and withstood hardship better than Watteau. Greuze's father whipped him when he caught him drawing, and Greuze also ran away to Paris with another painter, and he, too, when he got there found that nobody wanted to give him any employment. Both men were close on thirty before the turning-point came, Watteau by his election to the Academy, and Greuze by the exhibition of his picture at the Salon. But there the parallel ends, and the close of Greuze's life is more like that of Fragonard. For he also outlived his popularity and died in poverty.

It seems extraordinary that Greuze, the most popular of painters at all times, should have fared so badly at the end of his life. We cannot account for it by saying that Greuze could not accommodate himself to the change of taste brought about by the French Revolution, for throughout his career he was distinctly a bourgeois rather than an aristocratic painter. No, we must seek another explanation.

The miserable truth is that the seemingly sweet and innocent little person, who looks out at us continually from those pictures of girls' heads which have brought the painter his greatest posthumous fame, was the cause of her immortaliser's wretched end. To look at all the portraits of her which hang in the Wallace Collection, or at the one entitled "Girl Looking Up" (see Colour-Plate), which is in the National Gallery, is to find it difficult to believe that the original was an arrant little baggage. Yet some people, who profess to be judges of charac-

Photo: T. & R. Annan.

"LADY MAKING TEA," BY CHARDIN

Hunterian Museum, Glasgow.

Revealing a power of observation and justness of lighting which rivals the exquisite work of the best Dutch Masters, this painted fragment of everyday life also shows a grace and subtle refinement which is characteristic of France. Its beauty is as indisputable as its truth.

ter, say that the Greuze girl is not so innocent as she pretends to be.

The historic truth is that she was the daughter of an old bookseller on the Quai des Augustins, Paris, and Greuze is said to have married her to save her reputation. He married Anne Gabriel in haste, and he repented at his leisure. Owing to her husband's constant exposition of her charms, Madame Greuze became one of the noted beauties of the day, and though her husband was devoted to her and gave her crazily everything he could that she wanted, the ungrateful little hussy repaid him by robbing him not only of his peace of mind but of large sums of money that he had saved.

It is easy to be wise after the event, and Mr. John Rivers in his book on *Greuze and his Models* maintains that every feature of Anne Gabriel "announced a hasty, passionate, and rather voluptuous nature"; nevertheless, we are inclined, as human beings ourselves liable to error, to give our sympathy to Greuze and praise him for a generous and chivalrous action rather than to condemn him for having made an imprudent marriage. Though he painted other beautiful women, it is by his various fanciful portraits of his erring wife that Greuze has obtained his worldwide popularity, and there is hardly another instance in art of a painter who has achieved so great a fame by his exposition of the physical charms of a single model.

XII

ENGLISH MASTERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ENGLISH MASTERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE ART OF HOGARTH, RICHARD WILSON, AND SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

§ 1

IN all the annals of British Art there is no more illustrious name than that of William Hogarth. Not only was he, as Mr. E. V. Lucas has pointed out, "the first great national British painter, the first man to look at the English life around him like an Englishman and paint it without affectation or foreign influence, but he was the first to make pictures popular. Hogarth's engravings from his own works produced a love of art that has steadily increased ever since. During Hogarth's day thousands of houses that had had no pictures before acquired that picture habit which many years later Alderman Boydell and his team of engravers were to do so much to foster and establish."

That is where Hogarth differs from the French democratic painters, from Chardin and Greuze, mentioned in the last chapter; he was an engraver as well as a painter, and so was one of the first artists in Europe to devote talent of the highest order to providing art for the masses as well as the classes. People who could not afford to buy oil-paintings could buy engravings, and it was by his engravings that Hogarth first acquired fame.

Hogarth

William Hogarth was born in Bartholomew Close, Smithfield, on November 10, 1697. He was the son of a schoolmaster and printer's reader, who was apparently a man of some education and had the intelligence to recognise his son's talent for drawing, and to place no obstacle in his path. At an early age young Hogarth was apprenticed to a silversmith near Leicester Fields (now Leicester Square), for whom he chased tankards and salvers, and two years after his father's death in 1718 he felt sufficiently confident in his powers to set up as an engraver on his own account. Meanwhile he had taken every opportunity of improving his drawing, and had attended classes at the art academy of Sir James Thornhill (1676–1734), a portrait-painter and decorative artist much in favour with Queen Anne. He was especially renowned for his ceilings, and the Painted Hall at Greenwich is a famous example of Thornhill's art.

Hogarth did not get on very well with Thornhill and his method of tuition, which consisted principally of giving his pupils pictures to copy. This did not suit a youth so enamoured of life as Hogarth, who had a habit of making notes on his thumb-nail of faces and expressions and enlarging them afterwards on paper. In this way he trained his memory to carry the exact proportions and characteristics of what he had seen, so that his drawings, even done from memory, were extraordinarily vivacious and full of life. "Copying," Hogarth once said, "is like pouring water out of one vessel into another." He preferred to draw his own water, and this sturdy determination to see life for himself set him on the road to greatness. Previous English artists had not done this; they had looked at life through another man's spectacles, and their pictures were more or less good imitations of the manner of Van Dyck, Lely, and Kneller.

Nevertheless he continued for a long time to frequent Thornhill's academy, the real attraction being not the master's tuition but his pretty daughter Jane. In the end Hogarth eloped

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SCENE I. THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

National Gallery, London.

The first scene in Hogarth's celebrated picture-drama. Note how the young lawyer ("Silvertongue") is already beginning to court the bride, while her prospective husband admires himself in the mirror.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SCENE II. SHORTLY AFTER MARRIAGE

National Gallery, London.

The mutual boredom resulting from a "marriage of convenience" is the moral Hogarth points in this morning scene, adorned with a wealth of exquisitely painted details

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SCENE III. THE VISIT TO THE QUACK DOCTOR

National Gallery, London.

The harsh faces of the quack and his companion and the gay unconcern of the Earl are contrasted with the rigid figure of the little girl, the victim of his profligacy, in this third scene, which shows how the married couple are drifting apart.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SCENE IV. THE COUNTESS'S DRESSING-ROOM

National Gallery, London.

Hogarth's powers as a satirist find their fullest expression in this mocking picture of a polite company enduring an exhibition of "culture."

with Miss Thornhill, whom he married without her father's consent and very much against his will. At the time the match was considered a *mésalliance,* for Thornhill was a Member of Parliament and a knight, whereas Hogarth had as yet acquired little fame and had rather scandalised society by bringing out in 1724 a set of engravings, "The Talk of the Town," in which he satirised the tendency of fashionable London to lionise foreign singers.

Four years later, however, the tide was turned in Hogarth's favour when Mr. Gay lashed the same fashionable folly in *The Beggar's Opera,* which, produced at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in January, 1728, proved to be as great a popular success then as it has been in our own day. Hogarth was naturally attracted to a piece that revealed a spirit so akin to his own, and he painted several pictures of its scenes, one of which is now in the Tate Gallery. His genial, bohemian temperament delighted in the society of actors and writers, and Hogarth's association with the company of *The Beggar's Opera* indirectly led him to take up portrait-painting. One of his earliest portraits is "Lavinia Fenton as *Polly Peachum,*" the gay young actress who created the part and became Duchess of Bolton.

Democratic Portraits

This portrait—as indeed are all of Hogarth's—is a wonderful achievement. It has nothing of the manner of Lely or Kneller or any of his predecessors; it is fresh, original, unmannered, and sets life itself before us. To some extent, perhaps, he was influenced by Dutch painting, which has the same quality of honesty, but in the main he was "without a school, and without a precedent." Unlike the portrait-painters who preceded and those who immediately succeeded him, Hogarth does not show us people of rank and fashion. His portraits are usually of people in his own class or lower, his relatives, actors and

actresses, his servants. Hogarth was too truthful in his painting and not obsequious enough in his manner to be a favourite with society, and it was only occasionally that a member of the aristocracy had the courage to sit to him. Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, did, and the magnificent little full-length in the National Portrait Gallery shows how vividly Hogarth grasped and expressed his character.

Still more amazing as an example of Hogarth's vivid characterisation and vivacity of expression is "The Shrimp Girl" (facing page 203). It is only a sketch, mostly in greys with a few touches of other colours, but there is no work in the National Gallery more abounding with life. These portraits, painted with joy for the painter's satisfaction, never produced an income. He made his living by other pictures, and especially by his engravings, which had a wide sale and made his name a household word. The series of pictorial dramas which he invented brought him both fame and fortune, and after "The Rake's Progress" and other sets had firmly established Hogarth in popular favour, Sir James Thornhill became reconciled to his son-in-law, whom he now saw to be capable of earning a good living.

A Dramatist in Paint

Narrative pictures were not a new thing in the history of art; the reliefs of Trajan's Column at Rome tell the story of the emperor's Dacian campaigns, and we saw in the first chapter how Giotto and other early Italian painters recounted Bible stories and the lives of the saints in a series of pictures. But no painter before Hogarth had invented the story as well as illustrating it. Without any text familiar to the public, Hogarth by paint and engraving told new and original stories of his own time, and told them so clearly that they were universally understood. Sometimes these stories were almost wholly humorous, as in "The Election" series, but more often they had a serious

Photo: W. A. Mansell

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SCENE V. THE DUEL AND DEATH OF THE EARL

National Gallery, London.

The tragedy culminates in the Earl's discovery of his wife's unfaithfulness and his death at the hands of the lover, who is escaping through the window.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SC NE VI. THE DEATH OF THE COUNTESS

National Gallery, London.

The last act showing the suicide of the Countess, while her father seems more intent on securing her rings than on consoling the orphan daughter, whom a nurse holds up to the dying mother.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE SHRIMP GIRL," BY HOGARTH (1697–1764)

National Gallery, London.

"Life more abundant in her face you see.

Though hardly more than a sketch in its lightness of handling and reticence of colour, this is the most famous of all Hogarth's portraits for its amazing vitality and actuality.

intention and amusing incidents were introduced only by way of light relief.

To regard Hogarth as a satirist first is wrong: he was more than that; he was a great moralist. For though no man more severely scourged the folly of his time, Hogarth taught his lessons not only by exposing the ridiculous, but also by revealing the tragedy of wrong and the beauty of goodness. Among his many inventions none more beautifully display his method than the "Marriage à la Mode" series which we reproduce (facing pages 200-2) from the original paintings at the National Gallery; and though each one of these pictures tells its own story clearly, it may be helpful to summarise the action of each scene, and add the illuminating comments made by the great critic Hazlitt:

Scene I. The Marriage Contract

In a splendid apartment the father of the bridegroom points to his pedigree, while the rich alderman, father of the bride, studies the marriage settlement. "The three figures of the young nobleman, his intended bride, and her inamorato, the Lawyer, show how much Hogarth excelled in the power of giving soft and effeminate expression. . . . . Nothing," writes Hazlitt, "can be more finely managed than the differences of character in these delicate personages."

Scene II. Shortly after Marriage

Note the delicious touch of satire in the four pictures of saints which adorn the walls of a worldly interior. An old steward, shocked at the way things are going, is leaving with a bundle of bills and one receipt. The wife sits yawning at breakfast, while the card-tables and the candles, still burning, in the room seen beyond, show how the husband, lazing in his chair, has spent the night. "The figure, face, and attitude of the husband are inimitable," says Hazlitt. "Hogarth has with great skill contrasted the pale countenance of the husband with the yellow-whitish colour of the marble mantelpiece behind him, in such a manner as to preserve the fleshy tone of the former. The airy splendour of the view of the room in this picture is probably not exceeded in any of the productions of the Flemish school."

Scene III. The Visit to the Quack Doctor

The peer, with a cane in one hand and a box of pills in the other, rallies the sardonically smiling quack for having deceived him. "The young girl," says Hazlitt, "who is represented as the victim of fashionable profligacy, is unquestionably one of the artist's *chefs-d'œuvre*. The exquisite delicacy of the painting is only surpassed by the felicity and subtlety of the conception. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the extreme softness of her person and the hardened indifference of her character."

Scene IV. The Countess's Dressing-room

The gradations of ridiculous affectation in the Music Scene are finely imagined and preserved. The preposterous, overstrained admiration of the Lady of Quality, the sentimental, insipid, impatient delight of the Man, with his hair in paper, and sipping his tea, the pert smirking, conceited, half-distorted approbation of the figure next to him, the transition to the total insensibility of the round face in profile, and then to the wonder of the negro boy at the rapture of his mistress, form a perfect whole. The sanguine complexion and flame-coloured hair of the female virtuoso throw an additional light on the character. . . . The gross, bloated appearance of the Italian Singer is well relieved by the hard features of the instrumental performer behind him, which might be carved of wood. The negro boy holding the chocolate, both in expression, colour, and execution, is a masterpiece. The gay, lively derision of the other negro boy, playing with the Actæon, is an ingenious contrast to the profound amazement of the first.

Scene V. The Duel and Death of the Earl

"Silvertongue," the young lawyer whom in the last scene we saw passing a masquerade ticket to the Countess, has now been found out. The Earl, who surprised him with his wife, has fought a duel and is dying as the result, while the young lawyer escapes through a window as the Watch enters.

Scene VI. The Death of the Countess

A bottle of poison on the floor shows that the Countess's death is self-sought, while the paper near it, with the words, "Counsellor Silvertongue's Last Dying Speech," reveals the end of another leading character in the drama. While the father absent-mindedly draws the rings from the fingers of his dying daughter, the half-starved dog ravenously snatching the meat from the table suggests with subtlety the straitened

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST," BY RICHARD WILSON

Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy.

A noble and dignified portrait of himself by the artist who won lasting fame as "The Father of British Landscape." Owing to an ill-timed jest, Wilson lost Court favour, and his later years were spent in pitiful poverty and privation.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE THAMES NEAR TWICKENHAM," BY RICHARD WILSON

Capt. Ford's Collection.

[illegible] the light in the sky and on the water, this wonderful landscape anticipates Constable in the absolute fidelity with which it [illegible] of English scenery.

By courtesy of Capt. Richard Ford.

"ITALIAN LANDSCAPE," BY RICHARD WILSON (1714–1782)

A beautiful example of Wilson's poetic rendering of Italian scenery, and of his power to render the glow in the sky and the limpid atmosphere in a spacious landscape. Note also the dignity and harmony of the carefully balanced composition.

resources of the household as a result of previous prodigal expenditure.

While the merited success of his prints and subject-pictures made Hogarth a very prosperous man, he preserved his simple character to the last, and on one occasion he walked home in the rain, completely forgetting that now he had his own coach, which was waiting for him. He had a town house at 30 Leicester Square (now rebuilt) and a country house at Chiswick, now a Hogarth Museum, and when he died in 1764 he was buried in Chiswick Churchyard.

§ 2

Richard Wilson

The greatest of Hogarth's contemporaries, the link indeed between him and Sir Joshua Reynolds, was the artist known as "The Father of British Landscape," Richard Wilson. His is one of the saddest stories in British Art, for, though acknowledged to be one of the most eminent men of his day, and attaining a modest measure of success in middle life, fortune, through no fault of his own, turned her back on him, and his later years were spent in the direst poverty.

Richard Wilson was born at Penegoes in Montgomeryshire on August 1, 1714, the day Queen Anne died and George I ascended the throne. His father was a clergyman of limited means, but his mother was well connected, and one of her well-off relatives took sufficient interest in young Richard's talent for drawing to have him sent to London to learn painting. Though it is by his landscapes that Wilson acquired lasting fame, he began life as a portrait-painter; one of his earlier portraits of himself is at the National Portrait Gallery, while a very much later portrait, in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy, we reproduce (facing page 204). This magnificent work, which speaks for itself, is enough to prove that even in portrait-paint-

ing Wilson had, among his immediate predecessors, no equal saving Hogarth.

Like Hogarth, Wilson was of a sturdy independent disposition, little inclined to truckle to the conceit of fashionable sitters or to flatter their vanity, and consequently he was not the man to make it the staff of his professional practice, though in 1748 he had acquired a considerable eminence in this branch of art. In this year he was commissioned to paint a group of the Prince of Wales and Duke of York with their tutor—a portion of which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery—and with the money earned by this and other commissions he decided in the following year to carry out a long-cherished wish to visit Italy.

Hitherto there has been a general belief that Wilson did not attempt landscape-painting till he found himself in Italy, but it has recently been ascertained[1] that he unquestionably painted landscapes before he left England.

In Italy Wilson devoted more and more of his time to landscape till he finally established himself in Rome as a landscape-painter, only doing an occasional portrait. His beautiful pictures of Italian landscapes, in which dignity of design was combined with atmospheric truth and loveliness of colour, soon gained him a great reputation in that city, and his landscapes were bought by the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Thanet, the Earl of Essex, Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Dartmouth, and other Englishmen of high rank who were visiting Italy. Consequently when he returned to England in 1756, his reputation preceded him and he enjoyed a considerable measure of success when he first established himself in London at Covent Garden. But unfortunately for Wilson the taste of the eighteenth century was severely classical, and after the first novelty of his Italian landscapes wore off, only one or two enlightened patrons, like Sir Richard Ford, were capable of appreciating the originality and beauty of the landscapes he painted in England. Thanks to the discrimi-

[1] Cf. *Richard Wilson and Farington*, by Frank Rutter, 1923.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE INFANT SAMUEL," BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

National Gallery, London.

Sir Joshua once told Hannah More that he was mortified to be asked by even his more enlightened sitters for information as to "who" Samuel was!

"MRS. HOARE AND HER INFANT SON," BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

Wallace Collection, London.

Unsurpassed as a decorative example of the typically British open-air portrait, this picture is also a supremely beautiful expression of the tenderness of a mother's affection.

nation of Sir Richard and Lady Ford the best collection in the world of landscapes by Richard Wilson is still in the possession of the family, and by the courtesy of Captain Richard Ford we are permitted to reproduce two fine examples in these pages. It is only in the Ford Collection that the full measure of Wilson's greatness can be seen, for while the splendour of the flaming sunset sky in "The Tiber with Rome in the Distance" reveals how Wilson showed the way to Turner, the sweet simplicity and *natural* beauty of "The Thames at Twickenham" (facing page 205) proves him also to have been the artistic ancestor of Constable.

Wilson's English landscapes went begging in his own day. His memorandum-book, preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, shows how he sent them out on approval and often had them returned. As his fortunes dwindled, Wilson despairingly set about painting replicas of the Italian landscapes which he had found more salable, and these repetitions of his Italian scenes have done much harm to his reputation in succeeding years, for the later Italian pictures do not always attain the quality of the first version when the painter was freshly inspired by the original scenery.

Nevertheless, with the help of one or two unaffected lovers of art and nature who bought his English landscapes, and more who bought repetitions of his Italian scenes, and with the fees of his pupils—among whom was the diarist, Joseph Farington, R.A.—Wilson managed for some years to make a tolerable living, and when the Royal Academy was established in 1768, George III—who in his boyhood had had his portrait done by this landscape-painter—nominated Richard Wilson as one of the founder-members of the Academy. At the Academy exhibitions Wilson exhibited with credit, if without much commercial success, and nothing serious happened till 1776, when he sent a picture of "Sion House from Kew Gardens," which the King thought of buying.

A Fatal Jest

Unfortunately he sent Lord Bute to bargain with the artist, and this canny nobleman thought the price asked, sixty guineas, was "too dear." "Tell His Majesty," said Wilson roguishly, "that he may pay for it by instalments." Had an Irish peer been the intermediary he might have seen the joke and have made Wilson's fortune, but Lord Bute belonged to a race that is reputed to take money very seriously, and to be not too quick at grasping the English sense of humour. He was shocked and scandalised, deeming the answer insulting to royalty.

The harmless gibe cost Wilson what little Court favour he had, and proved to be his ruin. Fortunately, before this disastrous retort had been made, he had secured the Librarianship of the Royal Academy, and the salary of this post, fifty pounds a year, was all Wilson had to live on during his later years. His few patrons fell away from him, his brother Academicians—most of whom had been rather jealous—now shunned him, and he lived in a miserable garret in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, existing chiefly on bread and porter. He had always been fond of the last—"though not to excess," said Beechey, R. A., who knew him intimately—and want of nourishment rather than excess of liquor wrought sad changes in his countenance, so that he became known as "red-nosed Dick."

Just before the end he had a year or two of quiet and comfort, for he left London and made his home with his relatives in Wales, where he died, at Llanberis, in 1782. Wilson did not altogether abandon portrait-painting when he returned from Italy, and in addition to the noble portrait of himself, there is in the Academy's Diploma Gallery a very beautiful full-length of the young artist Mortimer, whom he painted about the same time. A splendid portrait of Peg Woffington, very rich in colour which hangs in the Garrick Club, is another example of Wilson's portraiture after his return from Italy.

Richard Wilson was the first English artist to show his

"THE AGE OF INNOCENCE," BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

National Gallery, London.

This delightful portrait of his little grand-niece, Theophila Gwatkin, aged six, while showing in its harmonious arrangement all Sir Joshua's mastery of the "grand style," also reveals the tenderness of his emotions and his reverent affection for the innocence of childhood.

countrymen not only the beauty of nature but the beauty of their own country. He should not be judged by such large pictures as "Niobe" and "The Villa of Mæcenas," which he painted "to order," but rather—so far as the National Gallery is concerned —by his exquisite "Italian Coast Scene" (No. 2646) and "On the Wye," which together show how beautifully and truly Wilson rendered the characteristic scenery of the two countries he so deeply loved.

§ 3

Sir Joshua Reynolds

When Richard Wilson was already learning the business of portrait-painting in London, Joshua Reynolds was a little boy of six. He also was the son of a clergyman, the Rev. Samuel Reynolds of Plympton Earl, near Plymouth, where Joshua, the seventh son, was born on July 16, 1723. Sir Godfrey Kneller died the same year.

Nature and fortune were both kind to Reynolds: the first endowed him with courtly manners as well as talent, the second gave him opportunities to use these to the best advantage. Doubtless Reynolds would have made his way to the front, by one path if not by another, but it was a piece of good luck for him when Commodore Keppel of the *Centurion* put in at Plymouth for repairs, and met the young painter at the house of Lord Mount-Edgcumbe. Keppel took a liking to the painter and offered him a free passage on his ship to the Mediterranean. Reynolds gladly accepted, and after a long stay with Keppel at Minorca, went on to Rome, where he gave himself up to that worship of Michael Angelo that he retained all his life. His well-known deafness dates from this early period, and was the result of a cold which he caught while copying at the Vatican.

From Rome, Reynolds went to Florence, Venice, and other Italian cities, returning to England in 1753, and then he settled

in London, never to leave it again except for a holiday. His youngest sister Frances kept house for him, and he never married; like Michael Angelo, the object of his worship, Reynolds said he was "wedded to his art." After living for a time at 104 St. Martin's Lane, and then at 5 Great Newport Street, he made his permanent home at 47 Leicester Square, and Messrs. Puttick & Simpson now hold their auctions in the room that was once his studio.

Reynolds did not capture the town at the first assault; the deep richness of the colouring he had adopted from the Venetian masters, and the atmospheric contours of his forms, did not appeal to connoisseurs accustomed to the lighter colour and harder outlines of Kneller; but supported by the influence of Lord Mount-Edgcumbe and Admiral Keppel, he gradually became acknowledged as the head of his profession. When the Royal Academy was founded, his appointment as President met with universal approbation, for it was felt that no painter could fill the office so well. Reynolds, as Mr. E. V. Lucas points out, "was sought not only for his brush, but also for his company; and though he did not court high society, he was sensible of the advantages it gave him. Other and finer intellects also welcomed him—such as Dr. Johnson, Burke, and Goldsmith—and his house became a centre of good talk."

Reynolds was not only a great painter, but a great gentleman, for long before the King knighted him in 1769, five days before the opening of the first Academy exhibition, he had shown court and society "that a painter could be a wise man and a considerable man as well."

The story of Sir Joshua's life is not dramatic; it is the placid, smoothly running story of his art, of well-chosen friendships, of kindly actions, occasional displays of professional jealousy—for he was human and not an angel—and of a happy domestic life. When his brother-in-law Mr. Palmer died in 1770, Sir Joshua adopted his daughter Theophila, then thirteen, and later her

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co

"MISS EMILY POTT AS 'THAIS'," BY SIR J. REYNOLDS

Sir Joshua's dramatic power is finely displayed in the arresting pose of the figure in this theatrical portrait. "Thais" was an Athenian beauty who accompanied Alexander the Great on his expedition to Asia. After his death she was claimed by Ptolemy, to whom she bore three children.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"MRS. SIDDONS AS THE TRAGIC MUSE," BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS (1723–92)

Dulwich Gallery.

The most famous example of "the grand style" introduced by Sir Joshua into English portraiture: the great actress is shown as a queen of tragedy seated on her throne. As he put his signature at the bottom of the painted skirt, Sir Joshua, in his courtly manner, told the sitter he would go down to posterity on the hem of her garment.

sister Mary Palmer also came to live with him, so that though a bachelor Reynolds was not without young people in his house. Both his nieces remained with him till they married, and it was Theophila's daughter, little Theophila Gwatkin, who was the original of one of Reynold's most charming and popular paintings, "The Age of Innocence" (see Colour-Plate).

His Love of Children

His grand-niece was six years old when Reynolds, in 1788, painted her portrait, a work which in conception and in every touch proclaims that it was "a labour of love." Indeed, nowhere do the simplicity, the benevolence, and the affectionate nature of the man shine out more beautifully than in his paintings of children. Splendid and decorative in its colour-scheme and open-air setting, his "Mrs. Richard Hoare with her Infant Son" (facing page 207) in the Wallace Collection has the same winning simplicity of intention; for it is much more than a mere portrait, it is a grave and tender expression of a mother's love.

The other side of Sir Joshua's art, "the grand manner," is seen in the famous "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse" (facing page 211) and in "Miss Emily Pott as *Thais*" (facing page 210). This was the side most admired by his contemporaries, and we must admit that Reynolds had a rare power of dramatic presentation, which found its happiest outlet when he was dealing with contemporary subjects. "The Tragic Muse" is something of a wreck to-day, because in his desire to emulate the deep, rich colouring of the Venetians, Reynolds made use of bitumen, a pigment which gives brilliant immediate results but never dries, and in time trickles down a canvas in channels, ruining its surface. This pigment, which liquefies like asphalt when the sun is hot, is chiefly responsible for the poor condition to-day of many paintings by Reynolds, and it must be admitted that as a *craftsman* he was not so particular as Wilson and Hogarth, who were careful in their choice of pigments.

When Sir Joshua was sixty-six he lost the sight of his left eye, and from this calamity and the dread of losing the other, which was threatened, he never recovered. For three years he lingered on, seeing his friends and bearing his infirmity with fortitude, but the will to live was gone when he could no longer practise his art with assurance. He died on February 23, 1792, and was buried in state at St. Paul's Cathedral.

"I know of no man who has passed through life with more observation than Reynolds," said Dr. Johnson; "when Reynolds tells me anything, I consider myself as possessed of an idea the more." Sir Joshua himself was distinguished by his literary abilities, and his "Discourses on Painting," which formed his yearly addresses to the students of the Royal Academy, are treasured and read to-day both for their literary merit and their instructive art teaching.

XIII

18TH CENTURY BRITISH PORTRAITURE

18TH CENTURY BRITISH PORTRAITURE

THE ART OF GAINSBOROUGH, ROMNEY, RAEBURN, HOPPNER, AND LAWRENCE

§ 1

Gainsborough

SHORTLY before little Joshua Reynolds celebrated his fourth birthday in the West of England, there was born in the Eastern Counties a babe destined to become his greatest rival in life and death. Thomas Gainsborough was born in 1727 at Sudbury, in Suffolk. He was one of a large family, his father being a wool-manufacturer and clothier of moderate means, while his mother was a woman of education, the sister of a schoolmaster and herself a skilful painter of flowers. Thomas inherited his mother's love of nature and her talent for art, and spent his boyhood rambling about the countryside and sketching the scenery round Sudbury. His gift for catching a likeness revealed itself early. One day, having seen a man robbing an orchard, he made a quick sketch of him, with the result that the robber was recognised from Gainsborough's drawing and arrested. The boy's faculty for copying, however, was not always exercised in the interests of law and order, and on another occasion, when he desired to play truant, he forged his father's handwriting in a letter to the schoolmaster asking for a day's holiday. The ruse succeeded, but was subsequently found out, and seeing clearly that the boy would work at nothing but his drawing and his sketching, the father wisely sent his son at the

age of fifteen to London to study art under the French engraver Henri Gravelot. Young Gainsborough also studied at the St. Martin's Lane Academy, and later became the pupil of the portrait-painter Francis Hayman (1708-76), with whom he continued nearly four years. In 1745 he returned to his native town of Sudbury, where he began practice as a portrait-painter and occasionally painted a small landscape for his own pleasure.

Unlike Reynolds, who was "wedded to his art," Gainsborough married when he was only nineteen. He fell in love with Margaret Burr, a beautiful girl of eighteen, who fortunately possessed an income of £200 a year of her own, and as no obstacles were raised to their wedding the boy-and-girl couple settled down at Ipswich, where Gainsborough soon acquired a considerable local reputation as a portrait-painter. Here his two daughters were born and the painter led a happy domestic life, sketching in the country between the intervals of his professional portraiture and spending his evenings playing the violin—for he was devoted to music—either in his own home or in the houses of some of his friends.

At Bath

In 1760 he was tempted to leave this simple life at Ipswich and moved to Bath, a fashionable centre to which everyone who was anyone in London society came sooner or later. From a professional point of view this move was the beginning of Gainsborough's fortune, for the fashionable world soon flocked to the studio of this "new man" who made his sitters look so august and distinguished, and the modest provincial who had begun painting three-quarter lengths at five guineas apiece now asked eight guineas, and was soon able to increase his figure to something nearer London prices. But while his fortune waxed, his happiness waned, and having now secured the entry into the fashionable world, Gainsborough began to pay attentions to other ladies and so excite his wife's jealousy. His home life was

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

MISS HAVERFIELD, BY GAINSBOROUGH (1727–88)

Wallace Collection, London.

The most charming of all Gainsborough's portraits of children, this picture admirably illustrates the lightness of his touch. This little lady is as exquisite and fragile as the flower growing at her feet.

Photo. W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE MARKET CART," BY GAINSBOROUGH

National Gallery, London.

This artist confessed once that he painted "portraits for money, landscapes for love." His delight in the simple happiness of country life is eloquently expressed in this masterly rendering of a typical scene in rural England.

no longer simple or happy, and as time went on his private troubles increased, for both Mrs. Gainsborough and his two daughters became subject to mental derangement. To the world, however, he continued to show a cheerful face, and his sprightly conversation and humour made Gainsborough a welcome favourite in all society.

In time the fame of the Bath painter spread to London, where Gainsborough occasionally exhibited at the Society of Artists, but though in 1768 he was chosen as one of the foundation members of the Royal Academy, he did not immediately leave Bath. He came there when he was thirty-three; and it was not till he was forty-seven that he was persuaded to move to London. In 1774 he took a part of Schomberg House in Pall Mall, and his success was immediate. "The King sent for him and Duchesses besieged his studio." Society was rent in twain, divided into a Reynolds faction and a Gainsborough faction, and under these circumstances it is not altogether surprising that Sir Joshua's jealousy did not allow him to be quite fair to his rival, whose power of securing a likeness he once formally denied.

Many stories are told of the rivalry between the two painters, and they have mostly increased with the telling in the course of years. As an example of the growth of legends we may cite the widely circulated story that Reynolds at an Academy banquet once proposed the health of "Mr. Gainsborough, the greatest landscape-painter of the day," whereupon Richard Wilson is said to have retorted, "Aye, and the greatest portrait-painter, too."

The original version of this incident is told by Thomas Wright in his *Life of Richard Wilson,* published in 1824, and here we learn that the dialogue took place, not at an Academy banquet, but at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street shortly after Gainsborough had arrived in London from Bath. Meeting Richard Wilson there, Reynolds in a bantering spirit said, "Have

you heard, sir, that our greatest landscape-painter has come to Town?"

"Nay, Sir Joshua," retorted Wilson, "you mean our greatest portrait-painter." Thus what was originally a piece of good-humoured chaff between two great artists has been twisted by inaccurate repetition into a display of maliciousness on both sides.

Nevertheless it must be admitted that there was a decided coolness between Reynolds and Gainsborough, and this was natural enough, for not only were the two men competitors for the patronage of Society, they were also temperamentally too far apart to understand one another completely. "With Reynolds," Sir Walter Armstrong has said, "deliberation counted for much; Gainsborough's good things are impromptus." The seriousness and slight pomposity of Reynolds could not mix easily with the free-and-easy gaity of Gainsborough. To Gainsborough, Reynolds seemed something of a pedant; to Reynolds, Gainsborough appeared rather a frivolous person. For many years neither missed many opportunities of getting a "dig" at the other.

"The Blue Boy"

In his discourse to the Academy students in 1778, Reynolds observed that blue should not be massed together in a picture, whereupon Gainsborough proceeded subsequently to paint his famous "Blue Boy," and, by his brilliant success with the boy's blue dress, put Reynolds in the wrong. It is highly probable that the blues which figure so prominently in his beautiful portrait of "Mrs. Siddons" (see Colour-Plate) are another expression of Gainsborough's disapproval of Sir Joshua's dogmatic teaching. We have only to compare this Gainsborough portrait with Reynold's painting of the same actress as "The Tragic Muse" to realise the difference between the two artists. Reynolds painted his picture in 1783, Gainsborough his in 1784,

when Mrs. Siddons was twenty-eight; but, though actually a year younger, everyone will agree that the actress looks years older in Sir Joshua's picture. Reynolds emphasised the intellectual qualities of the great tragedienne, his endeavour was to show the sublimity of her mind; Gainsborough was content to show the charm and vivacity of her person, and that is why Mrs. Siddons looks younger in his portrait. Another temperamental difference between the two artists is shown in their hobbies; while Sir Joshua was interested in literature and delighted in conversing with the learned, Gainsborough's ruling passion was music. He was not only a good musician himself but was completely carried away by the playing of others. Once when a talented amateur, a Colonel Hamilton, was playing the violin at his house, Gainsborough called out, "Go on, go on, and I will give you the picture of 'The Boy at the Stile' which you have so often wished to buy of me." The Colonel "went on" and eventually returned home with the coveted picture as his reward. This love of music makes itself felt in Gainsborough's pictures, which are lyrical, the paintings of an artist who sings, while those of Reynolds are more philosophical, the pictures of a man who thinks in paint.

Of all the English eighteenth-century portraitists Gainsborough is the lightest and airiest, and in freshness of colour and in gracefulness without affectation his portraits more than rival those of Reynolds. His "Miss Haverfield" (see illustration facing page 216) is more of a little lady than any of Sir Joshua's children, and though her gentility may not be accounted a virtue, and while we must admit that Reynolds's "Age of Innocence" has more psychological profundity, yet we cannot find another portrait in the world which excels this Gainsborough in rendering the flower-like charm of childhood.

Though by his portraits Gainsborough acquired so considerable a fortune that he could afford to have country houses at Richmond and in Hampshire as well as his town house, his

landscapes rarely found buyers and remained "admired and unsold till they stood ranged in long lines from his hall to his painting-room." At his death his house was filled with his own landscapes. The end came with some suddenness. A pain in the neck, to which he had paid little attention, turned out to be due to a cancer, and when the physicians pronounced his case hopeless, he settled his affairs with composure and prepared to meet death. He was particularly anxious to be reconciled with Sir Joshua, and begged him to visit him on his death-bed. When Reynolds came an affecting reconciliation took place: "We are all going to Heaven," said Gainsborough, "and Vandyck is of the party." Thomas Gainsborough died on August 2, 1788, and by his own desire was buried as privately as possible in Kew Churchyard. Sir Joshua Reynolds was one of the pall-bearers, and in his presidential address to the Academy in the following year he paid an eloquent tribute to the memory of his former rival.

§ 2

Romney

The third great English portrait-painter of the eighteenth century was George Romney, who never exhibited at the Royal Academy and all his life was hostile to that institution and to its president, Sir Joshua Reynolds. Romney was born at Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire, in 1734, when Reynolds was a boy of eleven and Gainsborough a child of seven. He was one of eleven children, and his father was a man of many occupations—farmer, builder, cabinet-maker, and dealer—and little prosperous in anything he undertook. George Romney consequently had his education neglected: at eleven years old he was helping his father in the workshop, and there he displayed precocious ability in drawing portraits of the workmen and other people. When he was twenty he made the acquaintance of a vagabond artist named Christopher Steele, who journeyed from place to place making

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

"THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER," BY ROMNEY (1734–1802)

National Gallery, London.

Known throughout the world by the title under which the picture was first exhibited, this pensive beauty, whose powdered auburn hair is bound up with green ribbon, is still an enigma whose identity has never been discovered. The charm of her person and the delicacy of the painting have combined to make this Romney's masterpiece.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

LADY HAMILTON, BY ROMNEY

National Gallery, London.

For nearly five years Romney neglected wealthy sitters in order that he might devote himself without interruption to portraying, in various guises, the inexhaustible fascination of the wonderful woman known to history as "Nelson's enchantress."

portraits, and in 1755 this man secured Romney as his pupil and took him with him on his travels. In the following year Romney fell ill with a fever and was tenderly nursed by his landlady's daughter, a domestic servant named Mary Abbott, and being a highly-strung romantic youth Romney married this girl in the first burst of his gratitude and later found her utterly unsuited to be his mate. Steele meanwhile had settled at York and summoned Romney to join him there as soon as he was well enough, and since he was not earning enough to keep a wife Mrs. Romney had to go back to service when her husband rejoined the man to whom he was apprenticed.

There was little good that Steele, a mediocre artist and a loose liver, could teach Romney, and their association was more profitable to the older than the younger man, and after a year or two in bondage at York, Romney managed to purchase his freedom, and he then made a home for his wife at Kendal. With this town as his headquarters, he rambled about the Lake Country painting heads at £2 2*s*. each and small full-lengths at £6 6*s*., till in 1762 he had at last managed to save a hundred pounds.

Romney was now twenty-eight and he felt that if ever he was to make his fortune by his art he must seek it in London. So giving £70 to his wife, with the remaining £30 he came to the capital, where he at once competed for a prize offered by the Society of Arts for an historical picture on "The Death of Wolfe." Romney was at first awarded a prize of fifty guineas for his version of this theme, but later the judges reversed their verdict and awarded the fifty guineas to John Hamilton Mortimer (1741-79), a young friend of Richard Wilson and Reynolds, and gave Romney only a consolation prize of twenty-five guineas. Romney, not unnaturally, believed this reversal of the first judgment to be the result of favouritism, and to the end of his life he thought that it had been brought about by Reynolds, who had been actuated by fear of a rival. In 1766 Rom-

ney again gained a premium for his "Death of King Edward" from the Society of Arts, to which he was now admitted a member, and henceforward he exhibited regularly at the society's exhibitions, but always held aloof from the Academy. In 1767 he paid a visit to his wife and two daughters at Kendal, and returning alone to London soon established himself in public favour and in the early 'seventies he was making over a thousand a year by his profession. He thought the time had now come when he should visit Italy, and in March, 1773, he set off for that country in the company of a brother artist, Ozias Humphrey (1742-1810), who afterwards became a famous miniature painter. At Rome, Romney separated himself from his fellow-traveller and led a hermit's life, shunning the society of his compatriots and giving his whole time to work and study. In 1775 he made his way back to England via Venice and Parma, studying with advantage the work of Correggio in the latter city, and reaching London in the month of July. Greatly improved now in his colouring and confident in his increased knowledge and power, Romney boldly took the house and studio of Francis Cotes, R. A. (1725-70), who had been one of the chief of the older portrait-painters, at 32 Cavendish Square, and there seriously entered into competition with Reynolds. Gainsborough, it will be remembered, did not come to London till 1779, so that Romney, though the younger man, was the first formidable rival that Reynolds had to endure. Charging £15 15s. for a head life size, Romney soon found himself surrounded by sitters, and Reynolds was alarmed at the way in which his practice for a time was diminished by the painter to whom he contemptuously referred as "the man in Cavendish Square." Later Romney had so many commissions that he was able to put up his prices, but even so he received only about 80 guineas for the full-length portraits which now fetch many thousands of pounds when they are sold by auction at Christie's. When Reynolds died he left a fortune of £80,000 earned by his brush,

Photo: T. & R. Annan.

SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BY RAEBURN

This Highland chieftain in the tartan of his clan is one of the most superb male portraits ever painted. In truth, distinction and dignity without haughtiness, Raeburn's masterpiece surpasses the elegance of Vandyck and rivals the supreme achievements of Velazquez.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

MRS. MARY ROBINSON, BY ROMNEY

Wallace Collection, London.

Famous as "Perdita," this beautiful actress was at one time loved by the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV, but though a reigning beauty in her day her vogue did not last, and she died in 1800 poor and paralysed.

and though Romney was not successful to this extent he made a good living, his income in the year 1785 being £3,635.

But Romney was never a mere money-grubber, and when at the age of forty-eight he first met his most famous sitter, the dazzlingly beautiful Emma Lyon known to history as Lady Hamilton, he was so fascinated by her extraordinary personality, that time after time he refused all kinds of wealthy sitters in order that he might continue uninterruptedly to paint the lovely Emma. In 1782 the future Lady Hamilton was a mere girl of twenty or twenty-one, living under the protection of Charles Greville, who four years later—when he was in money difficulties —heartlessly handed her over to his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, who treated her more kindly and honourably. For five years Romney painted this fascinating creature continually in a variety of characters, and though gossip soon busied itself making scandal out of their relations, there is no evidence that the painter's affection for her was anything but platonic. Of his many paintings of her we reproduce one of the most charming, the "Lady Hamilton" (see illustration facing page 221) in the National Portrait Gallery.

In the art of George Romney there is a peculiar feminine quality which gives an extraordinary winsomeness, almost a pathos, to his paintings of frail women. There is a paternal tenderness rather than the passion of a lover in his paintings of Emma Hamilton and of another famous beauty, Mrs. Robinson, known as "Perdita" (see illustration facing page 223). Romney's beautiful portrait of the last in the Wallace Collection was done while this gifted actress was under the protection of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV. But that royal rascal soon tired of her, and at the age of twenty-four she had already been abandoned by "the first gentleman in Europe." When he sent her away the Prince gave her a bond for £20,000; but he never paid it, and "Perdita" Robinson died in 1800, poor and paralysed.

Nobody has yet discovered who was the original of Romney's most famous masterpiece, "The Parson's Daughter" (see illustration facing page 220), but we may imagine that this beautiful creature with a gentle melancholy behind her smile was also one of the frail sisterhood to which both Lady Hamilton and Mrs. Robinson belonged. The extraordinary sweetness and simplicity of Romney's portraiture of women has the same tender reverence for the sex that we find in *The Vicar of Wakefield,* and the peculiar winningness of Romney is perhaps best described by placing him as the Goldsmith of English painting.

Though he never brought his wife and family to London—where it is probable that they would have felt ill at ease in a sphere to which they were not accustomed—Romney supported them in comfort, and when after years of hard work in London his health broke down, he went back to his wife at Kendal. She received him without reproaches, and under her affectionate care the tired worn-out genius "sank gently into second childhood and the grave." He died at Kendal on November 15, 1802.

§ 3

Raeburn

The greatest portrait-painter that Scotland has ever produced, Sir Henry Raeburn, R. A., belonged to a younger generation than any of the artists whose lives we have so far recounted. Raeburn was born at Stockbridge, a suburb of Edinburgh, on March 4, 1756, and so was 33 years younger than Reynolds, 29 years younger than Gainsborough, and 22 years younger than Romney. His father, a well-to-do manufacturer, died when young Henry was six, and his elder brother then looked after him, had him educated at Herriot's School—where he showed his leaning by making caricatures of his masters and school-fellows—and apprenticed him at the age of fifteen to an Edinburgh

goldsmith. There he also began to paint miniatures, and these gradually attracted attention till Raeburn broadened out into oil portraits and landscapes.

Like Gainsborough he loved to ramble about the countryside sketching, and in one of his open-air sketches he introduced the figure of a charming young lady whom he had seen crossing the meadow. Some time later this young lady presented herself at Raeburn's studio to have her portrait painted. She was the widow of a wealthy Frenchman, Count Leslie, but herself a Scottish girl, her maiden name having been Ann Edgar. During their sittings, the artist and his model fell deeply in love with each other; there was no one to hinder their union, so they were quickly married, and at the age of twenty-two young Raeburn found himself the possessor of a charming wife, a fine house at Edinburgh, and a comfortable income which made "pot-boiling" unnecessary.

Under these happy circumstances he rapidly came to the front as a portrait-painter. About 1785 he visited London and called on Sir Joshua Reynolds, who, himself now almost an Old Master, showed the young artist every possible kindness and gave him much good advice. Reynolds urged him to visit Rome and "saturate" himself in Michael Angelo, generously offering to lend him money for the journey. This, however, Raeburn did not need, but he followed the advice of the veteran, and went to Rome, where he remained for nearly two years and greatly strengthened his art. In 1787 he returned to Edinburgh, and soon after, inheriting some property from his brother, he built himself the splendid studio and picture gallery in York Place which still stands and is known as "Raeburn's House."

From this time on till the day of his death in 1823, the career of Raeburn was an unbroken sequence of happiness and success. Acting, it is said, on the advice of Lawrence, he wisely preferred to be the best painter in Edinburgh rather than one of

several good painters in London. But though he never resided in England, he exhibited regularly at the Academy from 1792 to the year of his death; he was elected an Associate in 1812 and made a full Academician three years later. He was knighted when George IV visited Edinburgh in 1822 and soon afterwards appointed His Majesty's Limner for Scotland.

Raeburn was probably wise to remain in Scotland, for it is by no means certain that the rugged truthfulness which was the chief characteristic of his portraiture, would have pleased London society. He was the most vigorous of all the eighteenth-century British portrait-painters, and none of them succeeded so well as he did in setting on canvas the splendid figure of a man. Though he has left us many noble and dignified paintings of women, Raeburn is held to have excelled himself in male portraiture, and his masterpiece, "Sir John Sinclair" (see illustration facing page 222), can hold its own for vitality, solidity, and dignity with any painted man in existence.

Raeburn was one of the most methodical and industrious of all the world's great portrait-painters. He rose at seven, breakfasted at eight, entered his studio at nine, and worked there till five in the afternoon. It is said that he spent more time looking at his sitters than in painting them, for he would search the countenance before him till he had penetrated to the character of the person, and then beginning with forehead, chin, nose, and mouth, he would paint away rapidly, never making any preliminary drawing, and never using a mahlstick to support his brush. His method was free and vigorous, and the results he obtained by it preserved the freedom and vigour of his process.

Though money is not everything in art, it is a rough and ready index to the estimation in which a painter is held, and therefore it may be mentioned here that the sale-room record for a British portrait was made in 1911 by a Raeburn, which fetched 22,300 guineas at Christie's.

Photo: W. A. Mansell & Co.

COUNTESS OF OXFORD, BY HOPPNER (1758–1810)

National Gallery, London.

Jane Elizabeth Scott, wife of the 5th Earl of Oxford, was a celebrated beauty who counted Lord Byron among her lovers. She was twenty-five when Hoppner painted this portrait.

LADY BLESSINGTON, BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A. (1769–1830)

Wallace Collection, London.

At the beginning of the last century the Countess of Blessington was famous for her beauty, her wit, and her Salon. The last was frequented by all the men of talent and all the men of fashion, including Count d'Orsay, celebrated as "the last of the dandies."

§ 4

Within the space of this Outline it is not possible to enumerate all the talented painters who made England during the eighteenth century the most prolific country in Europe for the production of notable works of art. The wealth of the country and the patronage extended to art by the Court and Society brought painters from all over the world to London, and in addition to the native-born artists many foreign painters settled in London, among them being the two American historical painters John Singleton Copley (1737-1815), and Benjamin West (1738-1820), who succeeded Reynolds as President of the Royal Academy.

Hoppner

In portraiture, however, the true heir of Reynolds was John Hoppner (1758-1810), who, though born at Whitechapel, was from childhood brought in touch with the high personages he was afterwards to paint. His mother was employed at Court, and his father—though there is some mystery about his birth—is said to have been a surgeon. George III was certainly interested in the boy when he was a chorister at the Chapel Royal, and perceiving his aptitude for art he made the lad a small allowance and in 1765 got him admitted as a student to the Academy schools. There Hoppner gained the gold medal in 1782, and later when he settled at 18 Charles Street, St. James's Square—close to Carlton House—he at once had the favour of the Court. He painted Mrs. Jordan for the Prince of Wales, and the three princesses for the King, and soon became the fashion. Though too much influenced by Reynolds to be considered a very original artist, and too hard as a rule in his colour and not strong enough in his drawing to be considered that great man's equal, Hoppner has nevertheless left us many charming portraits, among which "The Countess of Oxford" (see

illustration facing page 226) is usually considered to be his master-work. In this thoughtful head we see that Hoppner, like Reynolds, was also a scholar and a thinker, and he not only had great intelligence but the capacity to express his thoughts clearly and well. He was associated with Gifford of the *Quarterly Review,* to the first numbers of which he contributed some brilliant articles, which do credit to his powers of literary expression, to his artistic judgment, and to his goodness of heart, but owing to his intimate relationship with this famous Whig periodical and its editor he gradually lost the favour of the Court, which was given to the Tory party and its protégé, Thomas Lawrence.

Lawrence

Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), who succeeded West as President of the Royal Academy in 1820, had the romantic career of a child prodigy. His father was an innkeeper who, when young Thomas was three, kept the "Black Bear" at Devizes, where people of fashion used to stay on their way to and from Bath. Though the child got little education, he was wonderfully gifted and a lovely child in appearance. He was petted by his father's guests and he entertained them by quaint recitations and by drawing their likenesses with a precocious skill which soon made the child at the "Black Bear" the talk of the Bath Road. He was allowed to copy pictures in the great houses in the neighbourhood before he was ten years old, and once he was taken to London to be exhibited as a phenomenon, for his father, a complete adventurer, lost no opportunity of making money out of his son. Finding his son likely to be more profitable than his innkeeping, the father settled at Bath, where the pretty boy opened a studio and drew heads in charcoal for a guinea apiece.

In 1785, when he was only sixteen, Lawrence began to paint in oils, and two years later his father thought it worth while to remove to London, and this youth of eighteen was given a

Photo: Anderson.

"PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST" (SELF), BY ANGELICA KAUFMANN (1741–1807)

This artist, with the flower-painter Mary Moser, R.A. (1744–1819), was one of the two first women members of the Royal Academy. Speaking four languages fluently, skilled both in vocal and instrumental music, and amiable in disposition, she was as accomplished in her person as in her art.

studio at 4 Leicester Square, near the great Reynolds, upon whom he called, and who was exceedingly kind and encouraging. While continuing to keep his family by the pictures he painted for money, Lawrence was now able to study at the Academy schools. Prosperity increased as his talent matured, and soon after he had turned twenty he took a larger studio at 24 Old Bond Street; he was already the talk of the town and the darling of Society. As gracious and charming in his manners as he was in his art, royalty delighted to honour him, and in 1791 George III compelled the Academy to admit him as an Associate, though according to its rules twenty-five was the minimum age at which an Associate could be elected, and Lawrence had only just turned twenty-two. The king's will broke through the Academy's law, and when Reynolds died in the following year, Lawrence, at the age of twenty-three, was appointed the King's principal portrait-painter-in-ordinary.

The way was now open for his unbroken triumph. John Opie (1761-1807), the Cornish painter whose art was much stronger and more robust, might have been a formidable rival had he not been too abrupt and caustic in his speech to please a public that liked to be flattered. It was Opie who, when asked once how he mixed his colours, made the famous reply, "With brains, sir."

Hoppner also had lost his chance by attaching himself to the wrong political party, so young Lawrence had it all his own way, and after being made a full R. A. when he was only twenty-five, on the death of Benjamin West in 1820 he was unanimously elected the new President. Five years before this he had been knighted, and during the interval between his knighthood and his Presidency he had visited the chief courts of Europe and painted more crowned heads than any other English artist before or since. His prices were higher than those of any artist before him: for a head he received 200 guineas, for a full-length his usual terms were 600 to 700 guineas, but for some portraits—

like that of "Lady Gower and Child"—he received as much as 1,500 guineas.

Like Reynolds, Lawrence never married, but he was engaged for a time to the daughter of Mrs. Siddons, and treated the poor girl so badly that a tragedy ensued. He was so notorious a flirt that when he was painting the portrait of Caroline of Brunswick he was required to draw up an affidavit as to the propriety of his conduct. Though popular and tremendously successful the private life of Lawrence was not particularly happy, and though he made great sums he was often in financial difficulties owing to foolish purchases. He was constantly tempted to pay extravagant prices for paintings by Old Masters, and his numerous acquaintances—for he had few real friends—often took advantage of his kindness and generosity. His fame is lower to-day than it was in his lifetime, for there was an inherent weakness both in his art and in his character. The refinement of his drawing is still to be admired, but he had not the love of truth which distinguished his great predecessors, and beside their work the portraits of Lawrence are apt to appear artificial and insipid. He is seen at his best in his portrait of "Lady Blessington" (see illustration facing page 227) in the Wallace Collection, and looking at this elegant portrait of an elegant woman we perceive the subtlety of what Campbell said about the artist. "Lawrence," the poet remarked, "makes one seem to have got into a drawing-room in the mansions of the blest and to be looking at oneself in the mirrors."

Angelica Kaufmann

Another precocious child artist of the eighteenth century was the famous woman-painter, Angelica Kaufmann (1741-1807). She was the daughter of a mediocre Swiss portrait-painter who settled in England, and when she was ten years old, Angelica was executing portraits in crayons with the assurance of a professional. Owing to the sex prejudice which existed in

her day she was taken by her father to the Academy *in boy's clothes* so that she might improve her drawing. When she was in her middle 'teens she accompanied her father to Milan, Florence, Rome, and Venice, and it was at the latter city in 1764 that she made the acquaintance of the wife of the English Ambassador, who took a great fancy to the clever young artist and brought her back with her to England. Thus introduced to England in 1765 she soon became a general favourite, the young Queen being particularly attracted by her scholarly mind and amiable personality. In 1769 she was nominated one of the foundation members of the Royal Academy. The same year she was unhappily deceived into a secret marriage with the valet of Count de Horn, who had passed himself off for his master. This scoundrel treated her badly, and she only managed to buy back her liberty by giving him £300 on condition that he took himself off to Germany and did not return to England. With the exception of this painful episode, the private life of Angelica Kaufmann was as happy and serene as her own pictures, and after the false count had died she married again in 1780. Her second husband was a Venetian painter, Antonio Zucchi, with whom, and with her father, she returned to Italy two years after her marriage, and finally settled in Rome, where, happy, popular, and universally esteemed, she lived twenty-five years till her death in 1807. The "Portrait of the Artist," which we reproduce (see illustration facing page 228), gives a good idea of the personal charm of Angelica Kaufmann as a young woman, and of the soft graciousness which distinguishes her painting.